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THE LIVES

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OF THE

BRITISH HISTORIANS.

BY

EUGENE LAWRENCE.

"Namque et Herodotum illum, qui princeps genus hoc ornavit—et, post illum, omnes Thucydides dicendi artificio, mea sententiâ, facile vicit."

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THE LIVES OF BRITISH HISTORIANS.

DAVID HUME.

DAVID HUME was born at Edinburgh, on the 26th of April, 1711. His father, Joseph Hume, was proprietor of the estate of Ninewells, in Berwickshire, not far from the border line of England. Joseph Hume had been educated for the bar; but being of a quiet, unambitious disposition, preferred to pass his life upon his estate in the country. His wife, the mother of Hume, shared in his fondness for retirement, and cheerfully devoted herself to the education and improvement of her children.

Ninewells, the small property upon which the Humes of several generations had lived, was so called from a cluster of nine springs that burst from a gentle slope in front of the mansion, and flowed down into the river Whitewater, that bounded the estate. The situation of the house was pleasant, surrounded by fine woodlands, and overlooking a country renowned in Scottish history for many romantic adventures. It was that border-

land which so fired the imagination of Scott. Twisel bridge, Norham Castle, and Holliwellhaugh, where Edward I. appeared as arbiter between Bruce and Baliol, were hardly out of sight of Ninewells. The estate itself, as well as the neighboring country, had frequently been ravaged by the English garrison at Berwick, and it marks well the peculiar coldness of Hume's temperament, that he seems never to have recurred, with any unusual interest, to the landscape upon which he had looked in his childhood.

His father having died during his infancy, the care of the family, consisting, beside the historian, of an elder brother and a sister, fell wholly upon the mother. For her Hume felt an uncommon attachment. In his brief account of his own life he pauses to tell how—though young and beautiful—she had devoted herself, on her husband's death, to the care of her children. And the only instance of strong emotion recorded of him is that passion of tears in which one of his friends surprised him when he had just received the news of his mother's death.

The family at Ninewells were not rich, and were doubtless brought up with that rigid frugality for which the Scottish nation is renowned. Hume was taught early to be content with little; a principle that formed a large part of his philosophy. Being the younger son of a poor family, his inheritance was very small. His relations, however, seem to have discovered that he possessed talents and application, and designed him for

the law. He passed through the University of Edinburgh with no unusual credit, and apparently commenced the study of his profession. But, unhappily for his prospects at the bar, an insurmountable obstacle soon interrupted his progress. Hume had been born an author. A love for all literary studies, and particularly for philosophy, had become, even at an early age, his ruling impulse; and he soon abandoned the great masters of the civil law for Cicero and Virgil. In his seventeenth year he wrote a letter to his friend, Michael Ramsay, which shows that by this time he had already begun his original researches in philosophy, besides making some progress in controlling by its rules his passions and desires. It shows, too, much of that sweetness of style and elevation of thought, that so distinguished his later productions.

“Just now,” he writes “I am entirely confined to myself and my library for diversion. Since we parted—

———‘*ea sola voluptas
solamenque mali.*’

And, indeed, to me they are not a small one; for I take no more of them than I please: for I hate task-reading, and I sometimes diversify them at pleasure;—sometimes a philosopher, sometimes a poet—which change is not unpleasant nor disserviceable neither: for what will more surely engrave upon my mind a Tusculan disputation of Cicero’s ‘*De Ægritudine Lenienda,*’ than an eclogue or georgic of Virgil. The philosopher’s wise

man and the poet's husbandman agree in peace of mind and liberty, and independency in fortune and contempt of riches. I live like a king, pretty much by myself, neither full of action nor perturbation—*molles somnos*. This state, however, I can foresee is not to be relied upon. My peace of mind is not sufficiently confirmed by philosophy to withstand the blows of fortune. This greatness and elevation of soul is to be found only in study and contemplation—this alone teaches to look down on human accidents. You must allow me to talk thus like a philosopher! 'tis a subject I think much on, and could talk all day of."

It is plain that at sixteen Hume had already commenced his philosophical career. He had already learned to prepare for the calamities of a life by a calm and thoughtful self-restraint. He already hoped to place himself upon an eminence of stoicism from which he could look down unmoved upon the course of fortune. Great thoughts had already entered his mind—the contempt of life, the power of intellect, the necessity of moral purity; and upon these he could think and speak all day.

A philosophy that developed itself so early could never have been a mere affectation. The impulse which Hume avowed when he was sixteen attended him through life. His consistency with himself is remarkable; and this letter contains the germs and principles of his future course. He was ever after an ardent pursuer of happiness, not in the common paths,

but in the development of his own peculiar theories. "I was seized very early," he tells us, "with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the chief source of all my enjoyments."

This letter indicates, too, another trait in his nature—an early indifference to the impulses of religion. Hume had, no doubt, been carefully instructed in all the principles of Calvinism. Yet at sixteen he had grown indifferent, if not skeptical, and left religion wholly out of his plans for the attainment of happiness.

Having now openly abandoned his law studies, he probably gave himself up to study and reflection. Unfortunately the account of his own life is so brief that it gives little insight into his youth and manhood; and no record is left of his mode of life at Ninewells, of the friends with whom he mingled, and the pursuits and amusements of the quiet Scottish family, who, though unconscious of his singular endowments, could value him as a brother and a son. One saying of the excellent mother is related, which bears witness to the sweetness of his temper—"our Davy's a fine, good-natured cratur," she is reported to have said—"but uncommon wake-minded."

Of his brother, John Hume, little is told, except that he was of a disposition like the father—plodding and unambitious. He passed his life in improving his property, and seemed to shrink from that popular notice which his younger brother so much courted. The sister "Katty," as Hume affectionately calls her, never mar-

ried; but must have been an excellent economist—having contrived to live upon thirty pounds a year.

Ninewells has become consecrated ground. Few travellers pass it by without pausing to visit the birth-place of Scotland's greatest genius. The nine fountains, the fine scenery, and the romantic lore of the neighborhood, have become as famous as the fountains and the landscape of Vacluse. Yet Hume never felt any strong liking for his rural home. The city, he ever asserted, was the proper scene for the man of letters. He felt none of the charms of scenery—he had no love for rustic amusements; and, wrapt in his grand philosophical dream, he passed his youth without gaining a single image or sentiment from the scenes of nature around him.

Amid all his wide speculations, however, he could not but feel that fortune had not destined him for a life of repose. He knew but one great want—that of money; with every thing else philosophy had supplied him. He had a small inheritance, but not sufficient to enable him to live at ease, and he now resolved by a violent effort to tear himself away from the inquiries and studies in which he was immersed, and go forth into the world to get money.

The philosopher, who had been lately a king amid a world of subject fancies, and who was already composing a great treatise that was to disturb the whole current of human thought, next appears as a clerk to a Bristol shopman. Hume calls his employer an “emi-

nent merchant," but tradition relates that the young metaphysician was engaged, at twenty-three, in measuring out ribbons and cutting tape. The story may not be reliable, yet Hume evidently felt his bondage deeply. He is supposed to have dropped a sneer at the scene of his mercantile efforts, in his account in the history, of Joseph Naylor, the Quaker prophet, "who," he says, "entered Bristol mounted on a horse—I suppose from the difficulty in that place of finding an ass." His attempt at money-getting lasted but a few months, and then he fled, in disgust and disappointment, to hide himself in a strange land from the world and from his friends.

While passing through London, on his way to Bristol, to enter upon his mercantile engagement, he wrote, in a letter to some eminent physician of the day, that singular account of his mental and bodily condition, which his able biographer, Mr. Burton, has given to the public. This letter was probably addressed to Dr. Cheyne, who was a person of considerable literary as well as scientific attainments, and who had composed a treatise upon the diseases of the learned; if designed to attract the notice and patronage of that eminent practitioner, Hume's courage probably failed him, for it was never sent. Although written at twenty-three, it is composed in that peculiarly smooth and graceful style which seems to have flowed out naturally from his well-ordered intellect.

The tenor of this production, however, is not at all

philosophical. He seems to have fallen into a hypochondriacal state, in which, although in excellent bodily health, his mind and his imagination are depressed and gloomy. He has no symptom of disease except lowness of spirits, yet he complains that no physician with whom he has consulted, has been able to describe his complaint. This failure, he thinks, arises from their ignorance. "And the reason why I address myself to you," he writes to his new physician, "need not be told—as one must be a skillful physician, a man of letters, a wit, of good sense, and of great humanity, to give me a satisfactory answer.

After such labored compliments, Hume relates at large the rise and nature of his malady. To do this perfectly he proceeds to unfold the history of his mental career. "You must know then," he continues, "that from my earliest infancy I found always a strong inclination to books and letters. As our college education in Scotland, extending little further than the languages, ends commonly when we are about fourteen or fifteen years of age, I was after that left to my own choice in my reading, and found it almost equally incline me to books of reasoning and philosophy, and to poetry and polite authors. Every one who is acquainted either with the philosophers or critics, knows that there is nothing yet established in either of the two sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes even in the most fundamental articles. Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness

of temper growing in me, which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects, but led me to seek out some new medium by which truth might be established. After much study and reflection on this, at last, when I was eighteen years of age, there seemed opened up to me a new scene of thought which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with an ardor natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply myself entirely to it. The law, which was the business I designed to follow, appeared nauseous to me, and I could think of no other way of pushing my fortune in the world but that of a scholar and philosopher. I was infinitely happy in this course of life for some months, till, at last, about the beginning of September, 1729, all my ardor seemed in a moment to be extinguished, and I could no longer raise my mind to that pitch, which formerly gave me such excessive pleasure."

The young philosopher, perceiving his dream of enjoyment in study, thus suddenly vanish away, endeavored to recover his spirit by prescribing for himself the finest maxims of Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch. "I undertook the improvement of my temper and will along with my reason and understanding. I was continually fortifying myself with reflections against death, poverty, and shame, and pain, and all the other calamities of life." Philosophy, however, failed to give him happiness. He sank deeper into melancholy and ill-health, and growing every day weaker and

thinner, was in danger of becoming at last a sickly, consumptive student.

Fortunately, at this crisis, it occurred to him that exercise might accomplish what philosophy had failed to perform. He gave up severe study, and indulged himself in riding and walking. His appetite returned, his constitution changed, and he grew stout, healthful, and ruddy. His countenance was cheerful, and he seems from his twentieth year to have possessed uncommon health, a robust, tall, but rather ungainly figure.

Why he should write to a physician for advice three years after so marked a change had taken place can hardly be discovered. The letter was never sent, and was perhaps only a literary exercise, written in a moment of despondency, when he was journeying reluctantly towards Bristol, with some half-formed design of securing the friendship of Dr. Cheyne. At all events he went thither resolved "not to quit his pretensions to learning, but with his latest breath—willing, however, to lay them aside for some time, in order more effectually to resume them."

With this object he passed over into France, after his unsuccessful effort in trade, hoping, by great economy, to be enabled to support life in that cheap country, and to continue his studies. He seems to have felt deeply his failure to establish himself in life, and to have formed the resolution not to meet his friends in Scotland until he had done something in literature to justify his abandonment of the more common pursuits of his

countrymen. Like Milton, at twenty-three Hume lamented over the quick flight of youth, apparently so fruitless, and he fled into France to seek some distant retreat among strangers where he might at least live unknown.

He first visited Paris, where a remarkable scene had not long before been witnessed, which was not without influence upon his philosophy. The Abbé Paris, an excellent and famous Jansenist, having lately died, multitudes of those who had been the objects of his benevolence in life, flocked daily to his tomb to pray for the repose of his soul. Their piety and gratitude was signally rewarded. It soon appeared that the tomb had healing and miraculous qualities. The sick, who touched the holy spot, were immediately healed, the blind saw, and the lame walked. The Jansenists everywhere proclaimed the miracle. The jealous Jesuits in vain endeavored to discredit it. So great was the excitement among the people that the government was obliged to order the gates of the cemetery to be shut to quiet the general enthusiasm. When Hume arrived in Paris his attention must necessarily have been arrested by this well-attested succession of wonders, and to the good Abbé Paris, we probably owe a production which he would hardly have cared to expedite—the *Essay on Miracles*.

In Paris, he met the famous Chevalier Ramsay, the correspondent of Swift, and probably a relative of Michael Ramsay, Hume's early friend. The chevalier

advised him to study and imitate the politeness of the French, an advice which he cheerfully sought to follow. In an amusing letter to Michael Ramsay, written from Rheims, he indulges in the following paradox upon the subject of English and French manners: "When I parted from Paris, the chevalier Ramsay gave me, as his advice, to observe carefully and imitate as much as possible the manners of the French. For, says he, though the English have, perhaps, more of the real politeness of the heart, yet the French have the better way of expressing it. This gave me occasion to reflect upon the matter, and in my humble opinion, it was just the contrary, viz.: that the French had more real politeness, and the English the better method of expressing it."

Hume passed three years of exile in France—two of them at La Flèche in Anjou—composing his "Treatise on Human Nature." La Flèche, which had once sheltered Des Cartes, must have had peculiar attractions to the young philosopher. Here his great predecessor had been educated in the cloisters of the same Jesuit college, in which Hume now discussed with learned fathers the more difficult questions of metaphysics. There can hardly be a doubt, although he avoids all allusion to such feelings as unphilosophical, that the example of Des Cartes had a strong influence in stimulating the ambitious fancies of Hume. Des Cartes, like himself, had been poor, well-born and fond of letters, had abandoned his profession of arms and had given up his life

to philosophy. By his success in that study he had raised himself from obscurity to fame. His name had become as famous in that martial age as that of a great conqueror. He had won the admiration of the multitude and the esteem and friendship of kings, and when he died, unhappily in middle life, the courts and cities of Europe were filled with mourning. Such a career Hume now aspired to run. He, too, had resolved by the power of philosophical speculation to arrest the admiration of mankind and to direct into new courses the tides of human thought.

He relates, in a letter to Principal Campbell, the manner in which his famous argument against miracles was first presented to him. "It may, perhaps, amuse you," he writes, "to learn the first hint which suggested to me that argument which you so strenuously attacked. I was walking in the cloisters of the Jesuits' college of La Flèche, a town in which I passed two years of my youth, and engaged in a conversation with a Jesuit of some parts and learning, who was relating to me and urging some nonsensical miracle performed lately in their convent, when I was tempted to dispute against him; and as my head was full of the topics of my *Treatise of Human Nature*, which I was at that time composing, this argument immediately occurred to me, and I thought it very much gravelled my companion, but, at last, he observed to me that it was impossible for that argument to have any solidity, because it operated equally against the Gospel as the Catholic

miracles, which observation I thought proper to admit as a sufficient answer."

Hume was now gathering together all those loose speculations which had occupied his thoughtful youth, and endeavoring to arrange them with philosophical order. At length the Treatise was finished, and the author, full of sanguine expectations, prepared to give it to the world. Its publication, he thought, must prove the turning point of his life, and lift him at once from obscurity to fame; his opinions, so novel and startling, must at once attract the inquiry of every speculative mind; he could hardly fail to govern the opinions of his age by the force of his argument, as he hoped to delight all tastes by the simple purity of his style.

With such expectations he passed over to London, somewhat alarmed, however, at "the greatness and nearness of the event." The booksellers of that day seem to have been more adventurous than those of our own, nor could a modern Sosia be readily found to risk the publication of a work upon philosophy by an unknown youth, unsustained by any literary connections and without any personal influence. Yet Thomas Noone, of Cheapside, not only consented to bring out the Treatise, but gave Hume fifty pounds for the copyright.

Henry Home, afterwards Lord Kames, was one of Hume's early friends, though older by fifteen years. He had diligently practised at the bar and had already published several professional works. He had not yet,

however, allured by his friend's example, become his rival in ethics and criticism. At this moment Hume, an undistinguished student, looked with peculiar respect to the rising lawyer. To him he wrote an account of his intended work, sending him at the same time a copy of his *Essay on Miracles*.

"I have been here (London) three months," he writes to Home, "always within a week of agreeing with my printer, and you may imagine I did not forget the work itself during that time when I began to feel some passages weaker for the style and diction than I could have wished. The nearness and greatness of the event roused up my attention and made me more difficult to please than when I was alone in perfect tranquillity in France. But here I must tell you one of my foibles. I have a great inclination to go down to Scotland this spring to see my friends, and have your advice concerning my philosophical discoveries, but I cannot overcome a certain shame-facedness I have to appear among you at my years without having yet any settlement or so much as attempted any. How happens it that we philosophers cannot as heartily despise the world as it despises us? I think in my conscience the contempt were as well founded on our side as on the other."

The *Treatise* appeared in February, 1739. It came into the world, in the words of the author, deadborn from the press. Every hope that he had lately cherished now failed him. No admirers from foreign lands wrote to him in language of grateful admiration, and

the rival sects, from whose zealous hostility he had hoped for special attention, scarcely condescended to regard him as a foe. His work seemed too insignificant to awaken any higher notice than a severe but not altogether unflattering notice in a literary periodical of the day, a Review of the works of the learned.

In this moment of mortification and neglect, Hume sought to console himself in the reflection that the very greatness of his philosophical discoveries might prevent them from being readily appreciated, and that time would repay him by a full success for his momentary disappointment. In this anticipation he was not deceived. The neglected Treatise upon which he had so long labored with jealous affection, and which he gave so heedlessly yet so confidently to the world, has become a possession which men of thought have prized in every succeeding age. Its speculations have been the germs from whence have sprung contending schools of philosophy in every land. Scotland owes to it her unrivalled band of eminent thinkers, her Reid and Stewart, her Mackintosh and her Hamilton. Kant, in the name of German metaphysicians, has acknowledged how largely they are indebted to the youthful reasonings of Hume; and the Treatise has gained for its author an universal fame, beside which even that of Des Cartes seems sunk and obscure.

One result that plainly flowed from Hume's work was the creation of a Scottish literature. Until the moment of its publication Scotland had remained sin-

gularly indifferent to letters. With the exception of Buchanan, and a few versifiers in her native dialect, no author of reputation had preceded Hume. In the church and at the bar, Scottish intellect had long been conspicuous, but it had never until now seemed capable of higher achievements. While Spenser and Shakspeare, Milton and Locke, had been refining and delighting their southern neighbors, the Scots were contented to remain barbarous, rude and turbulent. When Bacon and Newton were spreading the fame of English genius over the continent, they were known chiefly as a race of needy adventurers, involved in endless civil broils, and glad to sell their services to any foreign prince who would employ them in his military expeditions.

The cause of this late cultivation of letters in Scotland was, no doubt, the unsettled nature of its government. For many generations the land had known little internal repose. Theological and civil differences filled the country with bloodshed. When England was listening at peace to the strains of Spenser and Shakspeare, Scotland had been torn and desolated by the contest between John Knox and Mary. On the accession of the Scottish kings to the throne of England, they seemed fated to become the scourges rather than the protectors of their native country. Charles I. persecuted his countrymen until they rose up in arms against him and aided in bringing him to the block. His brave partisan, Montrose, had, by his fierce and cruel enterprises, completed

the misery of Scotland. When the Restoration had seemed to promise an interval of rest, the bigotry of Charles and James desolated anew their unhappy country; nor was it until the union with England that the people of Scotland found leisure to unfold that remarkable intellectual power which had long slumbered beneath their misfortunes.

Before the union, Scotland had been a distant province of England, speaking an uncouth dialect, and inhabited by a poor and unquiet people; it now became a member of a powerful empire, was speedily affected by its civilization and adopted its language. With the union it began to grow rich and prosperous. Seaports sprung up along its bleak shores, crowded with ships and teeming with commercial enterprise. The country was enriched by an improved agriculture, the parochial schools were enlarged and made effective, and a new spirit of progress awoke among its intelligent people.

This change was sudden and unlooked for; it was chiefly effected during the lifetime of Hume. He might remember when the first Clyde-built ship put forth from the port of Glasgow to connect America and Scotland. He had seen the first founding of that magnificent "new city," which grew up so rapidly by the side of old Edinburgh, that in his later years he could point to it as the finest city in the world. He had seen grow up, under his own auspices, a literature unequalled in his own departments of history and philosophy by that of any other land. He had com-

inced his career solitary and unsustained, the only professed author of Scotland. Before he died there had sprung up around him Robertson, Smith, Kames, Reid and Blair, Hume and Mackenzie. The splendor of the "new city" was surpassed by the fame of that intellectual circle which was gathered within its midst, and Scottish intellect had already become a leading element in modern civilization.

When, however, Hume returned to Scotland, soon after the publication of his unlucky Treatise, the desire of seeing his relatives and his native land having conquered his reluctance to be seen by his old associates, no literary circle was awaiting to applaud and sustain him. In Edinburgh, as in London, he found himself wholly neglected. If he was known at all, it was only to be looked upon with dread and disgust, as the author of a skeptical and dangerous production; and he withdrew hastily from that city which was to owe so much to his genius, to hide himself, with his mother and brother, in the country. Here he could have found but little intellectual sympathy. John Hume, an industrious and prosperous farmer, must have looked with something of contempt as well as pity upon his erratic brother, who had wandered away from home to make a Bristol merchant, and had returned a penniless philosopher. Still, however, Hume's amiable temper made him an acceptable guest, and he once more gave himself up to study, and to the preparation of a series of

writings that were destined to become little less renowned than the Treatise. These were the essays which he published two years after.

While at Ninewells he had several correspondents, one of whom was Francis Hutcheson, Professor of Philosophy at Glasgow. This writer, an Irishman by birth, had gained a wide fame by his philosophical inquiries. He seems to have examined the third part of the Treatise, which was now preparing for the press, and Hume evidently consulted his criticism with respectful interest. During this time, too, he must have been cheered by the gradual progress of his work. It sold better than the publisher had anticipated, though far below the eager expectations of the author. In a few years a new edition was called for, and the circle of its readers grew steadily wider. Hume had sent a copy to Bishop Butler, who is said to have been struck with its unusual merit, and to have foretold the future greatness of its author.

For the third part of the Treatise, on vice and virtue, he found a new publisher, Thomas Longman, to whom it was apparently recommended by Hutcheson. Weary of retirement, or urged on by poverty, he now endeavored to be employed as travelling tutor to his relatives, Lord Haddington and Mr. Bailie, but was unsuccessful; no prudent father being willing to entrust his children to the guardianship of a skeptical author. Apparently his imprudent candor had closed all avenues of

advancement, and his literary reputation seemed rather an obstacle in his way than any aid towards improving his fortune.

In 1741, the first volume of the *Essays* was published at Edinburgh, and the second a year later. They were printed anonymously, as if he were desirous to make a new effort to attract public attention, wholly uninfluenced by the doubtful reputation of the *Treatise*. He wrote these essays, as he tells us, with the design of publishing them in the form of weekly papers; but out of indolence dropped that design. The work was immediately successful, and the next year a new edition was required. Hume heard that Bishop Butler went about everywhere recommending the first volume as soon as it came out.

Essays such as that upon the "Liberty of the Press," and the "Parties of Great Britain," must, in any age, have attracted attention; but at that period, when such subjects had not yet been treated in a calm and philosophical manner, they were singularly attractive to thoughtful men. The style, too, was as excellent as the thoughts were novel, and Scotland now, for the first time, afforded an example of an author surpassing the native English in the tasteful use of their own tongue. Hume's fine taste was of immeasurable benefit to Scottish literature. He displayed a purity of language not surpassed by Swift, with an ear for harmony that no English writer, except Addison, could equal.

The *Treatise*, however, was still his favorite work,

and we find him hoping, in a letter to Henry Home, that the success of the Essays "may bring forward the rest of my philosophy, which is of a more durable, though of a harder and more stubborn nature."

Two friends with whom he was in frequent correspondence, about this time, were William Mure of Caldwell, and James Oswald. They were both men of considerable talents and of active minds. Mure, afterwards member of Parliament, and Baron of the Exchequer in Scotland, was the most constant, and to him Hume wrote the following letter, which will give some conception of his lighter style :

HUME TO WILLIAM MURE, OF CALDWELL.

Sept. 10.

I made a pen, dipt it in ink, and set myself down in a posture for writing, before I had thought of a subject, or made any provision of one single thought by which I might entertain you. I trusted to my better genius, that he would supply me in a case of such urgent necessity ; but having thrice scratched my head, and thrice bit my nails, nothing presented itself, and I then threw away my pen in great indignation. "O, thou instrument of dullness," says I, "doest thou desert me in my greatest necessity? and being thyself so false a friend, hast thou a secret repugnance at my expressing my friendship to the faithful Mure, who knows thee too well ever to trust to thy caprices, and who never takes thee in his hand without reluctance. While I, miserable wretch that I am, have put my chief confidence in thee ; and relinquishing the sword, the gown, the cassock, and the toilette, have trusted to thee alone for my fortune and fame. Begone! avaunt! Return to the goose from whence thou camest. With her thou wast of some use, while thou conveyedst her through the ethereal regions. And why, alas, when plucked from her wing and put into my hand, dost thou not recognize some

similitude between it and thy native soil, and render me the same service, in aiding the flight of my heavy imagination." Thus accused, the pen erected itself upon its point, placed itself between my fingers and my thumb, and moved itself to and fro upon this paper, to inform you of the story, complain to you of my injustice, and desire your good offices in the reconciling such ancient friends. But not to speak nonsense any longer (by which, however, I am glad I have already filled a page of paper), I arrived here about three weeks ago, and am in good health, and very deeply immersed in books and study.

From this and other letters of the collection, it is evident that Hume had gradually formed a considerable circle of friends, among whom the ladies, with whom he was ever a favorite, form no small proportion. As he grew into notice by the fame of his writings, his mild temper and obliging manners led many to forget his unpopular opinions, while others of his associates either openly or secretly had adopted them. He began, too, his literary course by professing a philosophical and gentlemanly toleration for the sentiments of others, which seems to have been shared almost universally by the Scottish men of letters. They learned from him to mingle together without any outward exhibition of bigotry; and we find eminent clergymen, like Blair and Robertson, associating in intimate friendship with avowed skeptics like Hume and Smith. Dr. Leechman, another clerical intimate of Hume, almost as renowned as Blair for pulpit eloquence, sends one of his sermons to the philosopher, to have his opinions and corrections. Hume noticed some small defects in the style, and complained that it was not sufficiently harmonious. He

then goes on to offer an ingenious objection to the use of prayer, which he calls on Dr. Leechman to answer. The sermon was afterwards published, and was severely attacked by the violent party in the Scottish Church as heretical.

But although he might be received as a companion by literary divines, Hume found the universities, the common refuge of men of learning in Scotland, closed against him. In 1742 he made an effort to obtain a professorship at Edinburgh, in the place of Sir John Pringle, who was about to resign, and flattered himself that he must certainly succeed. His clerical friends, however, and even Dr. Leechman, seem to have been convinced of the impropriety of appointing him: William Cleghorn obtained the place for which Hume solicited in vain.

A period now came in his life to which he could never look back without disgust. Pressed by poverty and a desire to make for himself some small independence, he consented to become the companion of the Marquis of Annandale, a lunatic lord, who had also a great passion for letters. It seems he had been struck by some passages in Hume's essays, and formed a desire for his company and conversation. He sent the author a pressing invitation to come and live with him, together with a hundred pound note.

The offer, to a person in Hume's situation, was inviting. He was to have a home with the marquis, at his seat near London, and a salary of three hundred pounds

a year. He would have few duties to perform, and might spend the chief part of his time in study, besides making occasional visits to the capital. His first impressions of his new home were all agreeable. He wrote to his friends that the marquis was improving in mental health, and that Captain Vincent, a relative of the Marchioness of Annandale, and who also lived in the family, was "a mighty honest, friendly man."

But soon he began to discover that the marquis was more crazy and the captain less honest than he supposed. He found himself employed to copy out epigrams which the marquis had written, and to aid in the publication of a novel which he had composed to prove that the aristocracy of England were not altogether wanting in genius. When Hume urged that both Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont were opposed to its publication, "*Pardie*," said the crazy lord, "*je crois que ces messieurs veulent être les seuls seigneurs d'Angleterre qui eussent de l'esprit. Mais je leur montrerai ce que le petit Annandale peut faire aussi.*" Thirty copies were afterwards printed, to satisfy the vanity of the author, who was led to believe that thirty thousand had been eagerly devoured by his innumerable readers.

Unfortunately the marquis had worse qualities than his insane desire for literary renown. Often he was passionate, violent, and unmanageable. Captain Vincent, too, who seems to have had some private designs with regard to the disposition of his patron's large property, no sooner

found that Hume was too honest to enter into his plans, than he began to treat him with incivility, and even brutality. He sought to make the philosopher feel that he was little better than a menial. Hume commenced his companionship the first of June, '1745, and by October he wrote to Sir James Johnstone, a connection of the family, who had been instrumental in procuring him the appointment, in the following terms: "I must begin by complaining of you for having yoked me here with a man of the captain's character, without giving me the least hint concerning it, if it was known to you, as indeed it is no secret to the world. There is nothing he would be fonder of than to sow dissensions between my lady and you, whom he hates and fears. He flatters and caresses, and praises and hates me also; and would be glad to chase me away, as doing me the honor, and I hope the justice, of thinking me a person unfit for his purposes. As he wants all manner of pretext from my conduct and behavior, he has broken his word."

Not long after he writes in a still gloomier strain: "God forgive you, dear sir, God forgive you for neither coming to us nor writing to us. The unaccountable, and, I may say, the inhuman treatment we meet with here, throws your friend into a rage, and me into the greatest melancholy."

Still Hume clung to his situation, partly, as it appears, from a sense of duty to the family, and partly, no doubt, from the allurements of a considerable salary. Yet he writes to Lord Elbank: "My way of living is

more melancholy than was ever submitted to by any human creature who ever had any hopes or pretensions to anything better." At last Vincent prevailed upon the marquis to tell him to begone, and he was ignominiously turned out of the family.

Such was the situation to which his beloved philosophy had brought Hume in his thirty-fifth year. It was a melancholy consummation of all those fair visions of fame and affluence which had cheered him while composing the Treatise in his exile at La Flèche, or while rejoicing at Ninewells over the success of his happy essays. No means of a decent livelihood seemed now open to him who had written the finest philosophical work of his age, and whose fame as an author was already spreading widely. The tutorships, professorships, and other common means by which the learned of his country found their bread, were for ever closed to him by his skeptical fame, and in his despair he must have looked with bitter regret to the profession which he had too confidently abandoned, in which his contemporaries, Lord Kames, Lord Hailes, and Lord Monboddo, were already rising to affluence and renown. In the full strength of his manhood, Hume found himself still in poverty, condemned to accept the first humble drudgery that would yield him a support.

But the turn of his fortunes was now near at hand. In the year 1746 he was invited by General St. Clair to attend him as secretary to the expedition, which, at first projected against Canada, was finally to end in an

incursion against the coast of France. General St. Clair was a man of high honor and elevation of character, descended from an ancient Jacobite family. He had gone through much military service without ever having found an opportunity to perform any remarkable action; but his courage, generosity, and nobility of feeling had ever been conspicuous. His disinterested devotion to principle had been proved by many noble acts. By the attainder of his elder brother he succeeded to the family estate; but when the attainder was afterwards reversed, St. Clair at once restored to his brother the property to which he had no legal claim. To Hume, he proved a firm and liberal friend, and his name should be remembered as that of one who aided largely in rescuing Scotland's greatest author from poverty and neglect.

Hume, delighted with his new office, wrote to his friends "that it was very genteel—10s. a day, perquisites, and no expenses." His mode of life on shipboard suited his easy and inquisitive disposition, while he found connected with the expedition, several intelligent and amiable officers with whom he formed lasting friendships that ended only with life. So pleased did he become with military routine, that he would gladly have entered the army; not long afterwards he made interest among his friends to obtain for him a captaincy, the lowest post that he thought a man of his age could, with honor, accept. And had he succeeded in this attempt, he might have gained by his military expe-

rience, some new facilities for the improvement of his history.

But even this brief connection with actual war cannot have failed to add to his stock of knowledge. Placed in the midst of a large fleet, composed of sixteen ships of the line, eight frigates, and a land force of five thousand troops, and hoping to share in the plunder of L'Orient, a wealthy French seaport, where the India Company had large stores, Hume saw around him all the fierce excitement and all the mechanical instruments of war. The position he held was respectable; he was not only secretary to the general, but was appointed the judge advocate of all the forces under his command. Probably he had never looked into a law book since the day, when in early youth, he had thrown away Voet and Vinnius in despair; yet he apparently performed the duties of the office to full satisfaction of his patron; and had the further pleasure of finding that the perquisites were considerable.

The fleet, with the philosopher on board, bent its course towards Port L'Orient, and in three days, appeared before the astonished town. L'Orient lay at the foot of a fine bay, the entrance to which was commanded by a strong fortress. The town itself was weak, having only a single wall, and the citizens, taken by surprise, and conscious of their weakness, offered at once to capitulate, but upon such terms as the English, confident of easy victory, could not be brought to

accept. So ignorant were the engineers of the expedition that they promised General St. Clair, in ten hours' time, to lay the town in ashes; but their want of skill was soon evident, their balls and carcasses producing no effect upon the enemy. Soon the garrison increased to double the number of the English, heavy rains fell which broke up the road that led from the camp to the fleet, and at the same time, the want of good anchorage on the coast threatened the vessels with destruction. It was resolved, therefore, to abandon the design, and with little loss, the expedition returned to England.

Such was the disgraceful result of the intended invasion. No doubt at the instigation of St. Clair, Hume, soon after his return, published a plausible and ingenious defence of his patron's conduct. But had he attempted to defend the object of the expedition, he would have found the task harder. Since it was little better than a plundering incursion such as a tribe of Mohawks might have planned against the wigwams of sleeping Delawares.

Hume's free sentiments upon religious matters were no obstacle to his popularity with the officers of the army, while his amiable manners and ready good nature won him their lasting regard. He seems to have been generally liked. Many of his warmest friendships were formed during his brief acquaintance with camp and shipboard, and in particular, with Col. Edmonstone, Dr. Clephane, and Major Abercromby, he ever after remained in close intimacy.

While the fleet was still on the coast of France, but was already preparing to return, there happened a melancholy event, that may have given rise to the novel and startling argument used in his famous essay upon Suicide. Major Forbes, a man of learning, honor, and peculiarly amiable manners, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, had been spending some days at Hume's quarters, to recruit himself; and was there waited upon by the philosopher with such thoughtful attention, that a warm friendship grew up between them. Major Forbes was a person singularly sensitive to shame, and when he heard that the fleet must return, without having accomplished any great success, he took a very different view of the affair from that published by Hume. He believed his honor for ever tarnished by the cowardly retreat. Whatever others might think, he at least was convinced that all who shared in it must be covered with infamy. And the sense of his dishonor weighed so heavily upon his mind, that he resolved not to survive the return. Hume, to whom he confided his thoughts, endeavored to quiet his troubled mind, and left him at night, as he believed, tolerably composed. But when he visited him early the next morning he found him dying from a self-inflicted wound: he had severed an artery in his arm. Hume immediately sent for a surgeon; had his wound bandaged, and apparently restored him to his senses and understanding. Yet he could not prevail upon him to relinquish his design. He found his friend filled with a contempt for life, and

founding his resolution to die upon the principles of philosophy. He even begged Hume, as a last act of friendship, to unloosen his bandages and hasten his death; and Hume lamented that they did not live in Greek or Roman times which would have sanctioned such a deed. Major Forbes told him that he could live but a few days longer, and added that he died from a jealousy of honor, perhaps too delicate and refined. His forebodings came true, for he lived but a few hours longer.

This painful event seems scarcely to have shaken the calm disposition of Hume. He laments the loss of his friend, but expresses no disapprobation of the act. He rather applauds a boldness which defied the common belief of his time, and a philosophy that could so support the mind in such an action.

Soon after the return of the expedition, General St. Clair invited Hume to accompany him to the army in Flanders, where he offered him a tent, horses, and the use of his table, but without any fixed salary or position. The offer was exceedingly tempting to Hume, pleased as he was by the consideration and kindness which he had met with in the army, and fond of entertaining society; but want of fortune forbade him to entertain it. "Had I any fortune," he wrote to Henry Home, "which would give me the prospect of leisure and opportunity to prosecute my historical project, nothing could be more useful to me, and I should pick up more literary knowledge, in one campaign, by living in the general's

family, and being introduced frequently to the duke's, than most officers could do, after many years' service. But to what can all this serve? I am a philosopher, and so I suppose must continue."

The gay camp being closed to him by poverty, he cheerfully returned to Ninewells. His brother was yet unmarried, and his mother and sister were still there. While the philosopher had been courting the applause of the world, and had mingled with the great and gay, he had not lost that taste for study and retirement, which had made him so contented at home. He returned with satisfaction to the plain fare of Ninewells from the luxury of the military table, and gave himself up contentedly to books, leisure and solitude. His correspondents, however, had now become numerous, and among them were many military men, to whom he wrote in a far gayer strain than when he had conversed only with clergymen and lawyers. He was also engaged in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain half-pay for life, on account of his services as judge-advocate; and when he failed, he complained bitterly of the disappointment.

Had Hume, like Southey, been at the pains to delineate the associates of his rural life, he would have gratified innumerable readers, and all future generations would have delighted to become more nearly acquainted with that excellent mother, that frugal sister, and the quiet elder brother, with whom he lived so cheerfully. We should be glad to know how they dressed, talked, and

looked; what were the subjects they discussed over their plain dinners; what they thought of David's skeptical sentiments; and what effect was produced upon them by his gradual rise in the esteem of the world. But Hume lived in an age when such minute topics seemed beneath the regard of wise men, and in his proud and touching account of his own life, he dwells only on the fortune of his writings.

Mr. Burton labors to supply this deficiency by attributing to this period several scraps of prose and verse, which he has discovered among Hume's papers, one of which is apparently a character of the philosopher, written by himself. A few extracts will suffice :

"1. A very good man; the constant purpose of whose life is to do mischief. 2. Fancies he is disinterested, because he substitutes vanity in place of all other passions. 4. Licentious in his pen, cautious in his words, still more in his actions. 7. Exempt from vulgar prejudices—full of his own. 11. Social, though he lives in solitude. 13. An enthusiast without religion; a philosopher who despairs to attain truth." These traits of character seem applicable to Hume; but may have been meant for some one else. They were probably written to amuse the little circle at Ninewells; but there is no direct evidence of their author or their design.

The poetical attempts ascribed to Hume are of still more doubtful authority. That he was in the habit of copying verses that pleased him is evident from several

copies of well known pieces which remain among his papers. Those ascribed to him as original are only ascertained by the hand-writing, and by corrections and alterations which he seems to have made in the copy. It is not unlikely, however, that he may have amused himself at times by these poetical exercises, and I extract a few verses from one of them—the reader will not desire many.

4TH NOV., 1747.

Go, plaintive sounds, and to the fair
My secret wounds impart,
Tell all I hope, tell all I fear,
Each motion of my heart.

But she, methinks, is listening now
To some amusing strain,
The smile that triumphs o'er her brow
Seems not to heed my pain.

Yet, plaintive sounds, yet, yet delay,
Howe'er my love repine,
Let this gay minute pass away,
The next, perhaps, is mine.

Yes, plaintive sounds, no longer crost,
Your griefs shall soon be o'er,
Her cheek undimpled now has lost
The smile it lately wore.

Yes, plaintive sounds, she now is yours,
'Tis now your turn to move,
Essay to soften all her powers,
And be that softness, love.

Cease, plaintive sounds, your task is done,
 That serious, tender air
 Proves o'er her heart the conquest won,
 I see you melting there.

* * * * *

If these verses really belong to Hume, they show that he was incapable of writing poetry. The rhymes are bad and the verse filled with unnecessary and unmeaning expressions. Hume, who was clearness itself in abstruse philosophy, grows obscure when he ventures upon versifying. "The smile that triumphs o'er her brow" and "Essay to soften all her powers" are unintelligible. The lines, too, are full of expletives and repetitions, which show that the author who could not manage the simplest form of verse must have been wholly unacquainted with the more difficult measures; and they scarcely deserve the praise which Mr. Burton gives them of possessing simplicity.

Hume was a bachelor, and these poems are chiefly addressed to ladies. It is probable, as he was thrown frequently into female society, that he may have felt on more than one occasion a tender passion. He relates, in his life, that he always enjoyed the society of modest women, and that he had no reason to be displeased with the reception he met with from them. When, therefore, he begs "Clarinda" to "tell him why this scorn," or exclaims, "Hang my lyre upon the willow," he may have meant something more than mere badinage, and been sincerely in love. Mr. Crawford writing to him,

in 1766, says: "What keeps you in Scotland? Lord Ossory says it can be nothing but the young beauty for whom you had formerly some passion." But, whatever may have been the fate of his passion, it certainly never gave him much uneasiness, except these verses were its laborious fruits. In his essays he writes of love and marriage in what he designed to be the Addisonian manner, but which could hardly have pleased the modest women of whose favor he boasts, and he remained inveterately a bachelor. In the following amusing anecdote, which he tells in one of his letters to Oswald, he speaks with good natured contempt of the extravagances of the lover:

"Lord Marchmont has had the most extraordinary adventure in the world. About three weeks ago he was at the play, where he espied in one of the boxes a fair virgin, whose looks, air and manner made such a powerful and wonderful effect upon him as was visible to every bystander. His raptures were so undisguised, his looks so expressive of passion, his inquiries so earnest, that everybody took notice of it. He was soon told that her name was Crompton, a linen draper's daughter, that had been bankrupt last year and had not been able to pay above five shillings in the pound. The fair nymph herself was about sixteen or seventeen, and being supported by some relations appeared in every public place, and has fatigued every eye but that of his lordship, which, being entirely employed in severer studies, had never till that fatal moment opened

upon her charms. Such and so powerful was their effect as to justify all the Pharamonds and Cyruses in their utmost extravagances. He wrote the next morning to her father, desiring leave to visit his daughter on honorable terms, and in a few days she will be Countess of Marchmont. All this is certainly true. They say small fevers prevent a greater. Heaven be praised that I have always liked the person and company of the fair sex! for by that means I hope to escape such ridiculous passion."

His friend, St. Clair, having been appointed minister to Turin, was resolved to take Hume with him as secretary to the legation. The ministry wished to appoint another person, but the general persisted in refusing to accept any one but Hume. The philosopher was now to mingle in the gaiety of courts and to frequent a society to which he had been little accustomed. He wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced as aid-de-camp to the general.

Hume's appearance, while making, in this disguise, his first essay in fashionable life, is thus sketched by Lord Charlmont, who saw him at Turin. "Nature," says the acute lord, "never, I believe, formed any man more unlike his real character than David Hume. The powers of physiognomy were baffled by his countenance; neither could the most skillful in that science, pretend to discover the smallest trace of the faculties of his mind in the unmeaning features of his visage. His face was broad and fat, his mouth wide and

without any other expression than that of imbecility. His eyes vacant and spiritless, and the corpulence of his whole person was far better fitted to convey the idea of a turtle-eating alderman than of a refined philosopher. His speech in English was rendered ridiculous by the broadest Scotch accent, and his French was, if possible, still more laughable, so that wisdom most certainly never disguised herself before in so uncouth a garb. Though now near fifty years old, he was healthy and strong, but his health and strength, far from being advantageous to his figure, instead of manly comeliness, had only the appearance of rusticity. His wearing an uniform added greatly to his natural awkwardness, for he wore it like a grocer of the trained bands."

Lord Charlemont was mistaken ten years in Hume's age, and, perhaps, exaggerated the other particulars. Yet the description was not inaccurate as a whole. Hume's figure, tall, gross, and indolent, must have made a strange show in stiff military uniform, and his dull countenance never expressed anything but good-nature. These traits, however, did not prevent his remarkable success in society. The ladies of Turin were almost as much enraptured with his charms as were afterwards those of Paris. Noble tourists who frequented foreign courts must have found with great disgust that they were far less noticed by the great ladies than was "honest" David. And, perhaps, Lord Charlemont, like Horace Walpole at a later period, was

not unwilling, notwithstanding the veneration he expresses for Hume, to console himself for some neglects at Turin, by turning the fortunate philosopher into ridicule.

On his way to Turin, Hume performed a pleasant journey down the Rhine, and the Danube, across Styria, and through Mantua, the home of his beloved Virgil, of which he has left an agreeable account in letters to his brother. These form a journal of his travels, and in general are marked by simplicity and originality, without showing any powers or fancy, or any species of enthusiasm, with the single exception of his conduct upon Mantuan soil. Yet they come nearer to a personal narrative of his daily life and feelings, than anything that he has left, and afford an agreeable insight into his general benevolence and his good-humored mode of thought.

He was struck with the appearance of Holland, its fine cities and carefully cultivated plains. Nothing, he thought, could exceed the beauty and elegance of the Dutch towns; and his account of the Rhine shows that he was not wholly insensible to its charming scenery. From Coblentz, he writes: "We have made the pleasantest journey in the world in two days from Bonne to this town. We travel all along the banks of the Rhine; sometimes in open, beautiful, well cultivated plains; at another sunk betwixt high mountains, which are only divided by the Rhine, the finest river in the world. One of these mountains is always covered with wood

to the top, the other with vines ; and the mountain is so steep that they are obliged to support the earth by walls which rise one above another, like terraces, to the length of forty or fifty stories. Every quarter of a mile (indeed as often as there is any flat bottom for a foundation), you meet a handsome village situated in the most romantic manner in the world. Surely there never was such an assemblage of the wild and the cultivated beauties in one scene. There are also several magnificent convents and palaces to embellish the prospect."

Germany, desolated by so many wars, but ever abounding in cities, romantic villages, and an unexampled abundance of corn and wine, seems to have impressed Hume deeply and pleasantly. The vines growing thick along the banks of the river, the vast fields of wheat and grass, astonished an observer who had been accustomed to the scanty harvests of Scotland ; and Hume notices that notwithstanding all the exactions of the petty princes, who had filled their narrow dominions with palaces rivalling Versailles, the people everywhere seemed prosperous and showed few signs of want. He seems to have made no acquaintances among the Germans, and he little foresaw that among the plodding people around him was to spring up a literature peculiar, original, and powerful, which should throw a spell over modern intellect, and of one large department, of which, he himself was to be almost the founder.

At length he reached the Danube. Here the distinguished party of Englishmen were provided with a large boat eighty feet long, containing three rooms, one of which was the kitchen, another for the servants, and one for the travellers. Their boat, which probably resembled the arks that float upon the Mississippi, was destined to be broken up for firewood on its arrival at Vienna. It floated along slowly with the current, enabling the travellers to view at their ease the fine scenery of the river. From the Danube, he writes: "We have really made a very pleasant journey, or rather voyage, sitting at our ease and having a variety of scenes continually presented to us, and immediately shifted, as it were in an opera. The banks of the Danube are very wild and savage, and have a different beauty from those of the Rhine; being commonly high, scraggy precipices, all covered with firs. The water is sometimes so straightened between the mountains that this immense river is often not sixty feet broad. We have lain in and seen several very good towns in Bavaria, such as Strauberg, Passau, Lintz; but what is most remarkable is the great magnificence of some convents, particularly Moelk, where a set of lazy rascals live in the most splendid misery in the world, for generally speaking their lives are as little to be envied as their persons are to be esteemed.

"We enter Vienna in a few hours, and the country is here extremely agreeable: the river is magnificent: Germany is undoubtedly a very fine country, full of in-

dustrious, honest people; and were it united would be the greatest power that ever was in the world. The common people are here almost everywhere much better treated, and more at their ease than in France; and are not much inferior to the English, notwithstanding all the airs the latter give themselves. There are great advantages in travelling, and nothing serves more to remove prejudices, for I had entertained no such advantageous idea of Germany; and it gives a man of humanity pleasure to see so considerable a part of mankind as the Germans are, in so tolerable a condition."

He next relates his introduction at the Austrian court by Sir Thomas Robinson, the eccentric ambassador, whose tall, uncouth figure, and peculiar dress, led a French abbé, who heard his name mentioned, to mistake him for Robinson Crusoe.

"*Vienna, April 15.*—The last week was Easter week, and everybody was at their devotions, so that we saw not the court nor the emperor nor the empress (the famous Maria Theresa) till yesterday, when we were all introduced by Sir Thomas Robinson. They are a well-looking couple; the emperor has a great air of goodness, and his royal consort of spirit. Her voice, manners and address are the most agreeable that can be, and she made us several compliments on our nation. She is not a beauty; but being a sovereign, and a woman of sense and spirit, no wonder she has met such extraordinary support from her subjects as well as from some other nations of Europe. However, the English gal-

lantry towards her is a little relaxed ; and the King of Sardinia is their present favorite. She begged the general (St. Clair) not to be so much her enemy as his predecessor, General Wentworth, had been. He replied ‘ that a perfect impartiality was recommended to him by the king his master, and that he was resolved to preserve it, though he confessed that it was difficult for a person who had had the honor of having had access to her imperial majesty.’ We were introduced to-day to the archdukes and archduchesses (who are fine children) and to the empress dowager. She had seen no company for two months ; but, hearing that Englishmen desired to be introduced to her, she immediately received us. You must know that you neither bow nor kneel to emperors and empresses, but courtesy ; so that, after we had had a little conversation with her imperial majesty, we were to walk backwards through a very long room, courtesying all the way, and there was very great danger of our falling foul of each other, as well as of tumbling topsy-turvy. She saw the difficulty we were in, and immediately called to us (in French) ‘ Go without ceremony, gentlemen ; you are not accustomed to this movement, and the floor is slippery.’ We esteemed ourselves very much obliged to her for this attention, especially my companions, who were desperately afraid of my falling on them or crushing them.

“ This court is fine, without being gay ; and the company is very accessible, without being very sociable. When we were introduced to the emperor and empress

Sir Thomas Robinson gathered us all together into a window, that he might be able to carry us to them at once, when the time should be proper. A lady came up to him, and asked him if these were not his chickens he was gathering under his wings. After which she joined in conversation with us, and in a little time asked us if we had any acquaintance of the ladies of the court, and if we should not be glad to know their names. We replied that she could not do us a greater favor. 'Why, then,' says she, 'I shall tell you, beginning with myself. I am the Countess ——,' she added her name, which I am sorry to have forgot. We have met with several instances of these agreeable liberties. The women are most of them handsome; if you ever want toasts, please to name, upon my authority, Mademoiselle Staremberg, or the Countess Palfi.

"The men are ugly and awkward. We have seen all those fierce heroes whom we have so often read of in gazettes—the Lichtensteins, the Esterhazys, the Coloredos; most of them have red heels to their shoes, and wear very well-dressed toupees."

Hume evidently watched with keen eyes the usages of courts and the manners of courtiers; he was gathering materials for history. The diplomatic state in which he travelled was less favorable to his forming an acquaintance with the people. Yet his remarks on Germany show that he was not indifferent to their interest, and prove the goodness and generosity of his heart. It gave him sincere pleasure to see so great a number living in

plenty and prosperity; and the surprise which he expresses at this spectacle, shows how little Germany, in that day, was known to Englishmen.

Leaving Vienna, he entered the romantic region of Styria. The singular beauty of the country delighted him. He travelled along the river banks, always in a valley, surrounded by high hills, and passing through a constant succession of wild, agreeable prospects. The valleys were in the full bloom of spring, finely cultivated, and teeming with fertility. The hills by their side were covered with firs and larches, the tops of which were glistening with snow. "You might see a tree white with blossom, and a few feet higher up the ground was white with snow." Charmed with the wild scenery of Styria, he was shocked by the appearance of its people. They were savage, deformed, and monstrous; their throats affected with great swellings; the villages swarmed with idiots and deaf people; and the general appearance of the inhabitants was the most shocking he had ever seen. He accounts for this fact by supposing that the barbarous hordes, in their inroads into the Roman empire, had left the refuse of their tribes in Styria. One quality alone redeemed the repulsiveness of these people—they had voices of wonderful sweetness, and sang in delicious harmony.

As he approached Italy the aspect of the native inhabitants changed. The Tyrolese were as beautiful as the Styrians had been ugly. Humanity, spirit, health and plenty beamed in every face. Yet no reason

could be offered for this improvement; they were still Austrians, and Hume puzzled himself in vain to account for this singular fact. He thus describes his entrance into Italy:

“We traced the Drave to its source (that river, you know, falls into the Danube and into the Black Sea). It ended in a small rivulet and then a little bog on the top of the hill (though there was then a well-cultivated plain); there was no more appearance of spring than at Christmas. In about a mile after we had seen the Drave extinguished, we observed a little stripe of water to move. This was the beginning of the Adige and the rivers that run into the Adriatic. We were now turning towards the south part of the hill, and descended with great rapidity. Our little brook, in three or four miles, became a considerable river, and every hour’s travelling showed us a new aspect of spring; so that in one day we passed through all the gradations of that beautiful season, as we descended lower into the valleys, from its first dawn till its full bloom and glory. We are here in Italy; at least, the common language of the people is Italian. This town (Trent) is not remarkable either for size or beauty. ’Tis famous only for a wise assembly of philosophers and divines, who established such rational tenets for the belief of mankind.”

One burst of enthusiasm broke from the philosopher when, at length, he stood upon the earth that had produced the poet, who lured him from his law books in youth, and who, in later life, continued to chasten and

delight his cultivated taste. From Mantua, 11th May, he writes: "We are now in the classic ground and I have kissed the earth that produced Virgil, and have admired those fertile plains that he has so finely celebrated

"Perdidit aut quales felices Mantua campos."

You are tired and so am I, of the descriptions of countries, and, therefore, I shall only say, that nothing can be more singularly beautiful than the plains of Lombardy, nor more beggarly and miserable than this town. "Alas, poor Italy!"

This journal, like all the records Hume has left of himself, is remarkably deficient in personal details. Unlike other travellers he never gratifies his readers with an account of the rooms he lodged in, the inn-keeper he patronized, or the prices he had to pay for his lodging. He views everything in general, nothing in particular. He takes pains to describe no one of the remarkable scenes through which he passed, nor gives the family at Ninewells any clear conception of the Rhine, the Danube, or the Drave. Ehrenbreitstein, Drachenfels, and the many romantic castles upon their banks, are passed by with only a general allusion; and he evidently possessed nothing of that peculiar power which enables a practised eye and a keen imagination to select the prominent features of a landscape, embody them in animated language, and present them to the reader a clear and well constructed view. John Hume could

have formed but little better idea of the continent from these letters than he might have obtained from a common guide-book. Of general policy and the condition of the people, he might gain something, but their habits, manners, dress and amusements, their cities, villages and rural dwellings, their peculiar occupation and pursuits, are wholly overlooked by the philosopher.

This fondness for generalization was one of the peculiarities of his intellect, and is a leading trait in his historical writings. Had he possessed the power to describe individual scenes and to paint the manners of the people of different ages, he would have filled up his bare and meagre narrative of the Anglo-Saxons and Normans with an interest not less than that which he has thrown around the reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts.

Imperfect as his journal is in all private details, it is to be regretted that it should break off with his entrance into Italy. He tells us, in his "life," that he passed his time agreeably at the Sardinian court, in good company, and by his appointments made a considerable addition to his small fortune. These two years, he asserts, were the only portion of his life passed without study; he was too much engaged with society and amusement to give much time to his books.

During his absence in Italy, was published anonymously, in London, his "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals." Believing that his Treatise on Human Nature had been given to the press too hastily, he had

in a measure rewritten it, and by correcting the style and arrangement hoped to make it acceptable, in its new form, to the public taste. He desired, therefore, and even demanded, that the Treatise should be wholly forgotten and the new work substituted in its place. The "Inquiry," however, was even less successful than had been the "Treatise." Hume had the mortification to discover that he was not yet of sufficient importance to merit the brutal attacks of Warburton, or the savage sarcasm of Johnson; and what was more annoying, he saw another assume the unpleasant position which he had so much coveted. Conyers Middleton had just published his "Free Inquiry into the early Christian Miracles," a work which was assailed by a crowd of distinguished and obscure opponents. "All England," says Hume, "was in a ferment on account of this work, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected."

But this neglect could not continue much longer. Hume was too keen an adversary not to attract the attention of those divines who sought to reconcile reason and faith. His books, all but the unlucky Treatise, began to be the subject of conversation, and new editions were demanded. What was better, he was soon to be assailed "with all the violence of the Warburtonian school." In Scotland, he had succeeded by the gentleness of his manners and the purity of his life, in disarming controversy of its bitterness. No eminent Scotchman had treated him harshly; and his

countrymen gave him credit for being a sincere inquirer after truth, although his researches had unhappily led him far astray. But it was not so in England. There his ingenious speculations were destined to draw upon him a "cry of horror and reproach;" nor had Hume ever expected gentle treatment from a nation which he believed to be sunk in commercial barbarism. He hoped for no philosophic liberality, nor gentlemanly courtesy from Englishmen. Their chief controversialist, Warburton, who led the ranks of polemic literature, was noted for his violence and coarse brutality. He brought into letters the manners of an attorney's clerk, and had gained his position as a writer by the rude strength of his intellect and the extent of his learning, rather than by any display of refinement and cultivation. Two years later, in 1749, Warburton writes to Hurd, as if just awaking to the danger of the church: "I am strongly tempted to have a stroke at Hume in passing. He is the author of a little book called "Philosophical Essays," in one part of which he argues against the being of a God, and in another (very needlessly, you will say), against the possibility of miracles. He has crowned the liberty of the press, and yet has a considerable place under government. I have a great mind to do justice to his argument against miracles, which, I think, might be done in a few words. But does he deserve notice? Is he known among you? Pray, answer these questions. For if his own weight keeps him down I should be sorry to contribute to his

advancement to any place but pillory." So slowly had Hume's fame risen! at thirty-seven he was scarcely known to the greatest literary authority of the time, and so undistinguished as to be scarcely worthy of notice! Of his works, Warburton mentions only the *Essays*, and either overlooks, or had never heard of the "*Treatise*," and the "*Inquiry*." But from this time Hume had no cause to complain of the indifference of the Warburtonian school of critics.

On his return to England from Turin, he was destined to meet with a shock far more painful and irremediable than the slow sale of his cherished works. While he was yet in London, preparing to rejoin the cheerful circle at Ninewells, he received news of his mother's death. The following anecdote is told of the manner in which he received the intelligence :

"David and he (the Hon. Mr. Boyle, brother of the Earl of Glasgow) were both in London at the period when David's mother died. Mr. Boyle hearing of it, soon after went into his apartment, for they lodged in the same house, where he found him in the deepest affliction and in a flood of tears. After the usual topics of condolence, Mr. Boyle said to him : 'My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to having thrown off the principles of religion ; for, if you had not, you would have been consoled with the firm belief that the good lady, who was not only the best of mothers, but the most pious of Christians, and completely happy in the realms of the just.' To which David replied :

‘Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet in other things I do not think so differently from the rest of the world, as you suppose.’ ”

Hume returned once more to Ninewells to live with his brother and sister, to miss every moment that gentle face which had looked upon him from infancy until now. His political friends had apparently forgotten him, and he no longer held any post under government to annoy the zealous Warburton. He must naturally have felt the loss of the dignity and emolument of office, and to a person of his cheerful and sociable nature the want of that intelligent society which he found abroad, could not be easily supplied at Ninewells. However he once more fell into his old frugal way of living, spending little, reading much, and writing incessantly. He seems to have passed no year of his life without having some work upon his hands, in the composition of which he could find constant exercise for his peculiar faculties. He now writes to Dr. Clephane, who had been surgeon to the expedition against Port L’Orient. “You would, perhaps, ask how I employ my time in this leisure and solitude, and what are my occupations? Pray, do you expect that I should convey to you an encyclopedia in the compass of a letter? The last thing I took my hand from was a very learned and elaborate discourse concerning the populousness of antiquity; not altogether in opposition to Vossius and Montesquieu, who exaggerate that affair

infinitely, but starting some doubts and scruples and difficulties, sufficient to make us suspend our judgment on that head." This paper, on which he was now engaged, was the "Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations," the most learned of all his writings. Before composing it he relates that he read through all the classical authors, and it has every mark of having been written with unusual care.

Dr. Clephane, to whom the letter is addressed, was for many years Hume's constant correspondent. Apparently frank, gay, intelligent, and well read, he resembles in these qualities, the rest of that agreeable circle of friends whom Hume, notwithstanding his unpopular opinions, contrived to draw around him. While living at Ninewells, or at Edinburgh, in a society in which he could not fail to meet frequently with unpleasant treatment or uncivil remarks, Hume seems to have recalled with peculiar pleasure his associates of the camp and embassy. To Dr. Clephane and Col. Edmonstone he opens all his heart, gives them an account of his plans, his studies, the state of his fortunes, and the nature of his most private feelings; and now and then repays by a free satire upon the zealots, those slights and mortifications which they sometimes put upon him. Concealing, as he did in his daily conversation, many of his peculiar sentiments, it was a satisfaction to him to possess friends to whom he could unreservedly pour forth the broadest and most heretical of his speculations.

In truth, the position which Hume held in society could not but be painful. By a large portion of his countrymen he was looked upon as an object of loathing and alarm. The higher he rose in reputation, the stronger grew this feeling, which can only be paralleled by the hatred with which zealous Catholics in Italy look upon a Protestant, or the pleasure with which those of Lisbon were accustomed to witness an auto-da-fé. Toleration in that day had not reached far. The Scottish clergy, and particularly their ignorant parishioners, visited far less faults than that of Hume, with excommunication and the bitterest censures of the church. In England there was little more liberality. Although infidelity among the higher classes was widely spread, the clergy, the men of letters, and the ignorant mob looked with equal horror upon the avowed skeptic as a person hated of God, and likely to call down the judgments of heaven on the nation which tolerated his impiety. An instance of this superstition Hume relates in a letter to Dr. Clephane.

During the year 1750, London had been alarmed by several shocks of earthquake. Horace Walpole describes them as sufficiently startling. "I had been awake," he says, "and scarce dozed again. On a sudden I felt my bolster lift up my head. I thought somebody was getting from under my bed, but soon found it was a strong earthquake, that lasted near half a minute, with violent vibration and great roaring. I rang my bell. My servant came in frightened out of

his senses. In an instant we heard all the windows of the neighborhood flung up. I got up and found people running in the streets, but saw no mischief done." The effect of these alarms was to produce an uncommon degree of devotion. The clergy seized the favorable moment to impress the minds of their people with the necessity of a deeper sense of religion. A flood of sermons and pamphlets were poured forth from the press, which sold with unusual rapidity. Of Sherlock, Bishop of London's pastoral letter on this occasion, ten thousand were sold in two days, and fifty thousand were subscribed for after two editions had been exhausted.

The skeptical productions of Hume, at such a time, must necessarily, more than ever, shock the public feeling. He writes to Clephane: "You will scarcely believe what I am going to tell you; but it is literally true. Miller had printed off some months ago, a new edition of certain philosophical essays; but he tells me very gravely that he was delayed publishing because of the earthquakes." The book-seller was, no doubt, right; but Hume was evidently annoyed to find that he must be silenced by an earthquake.

With James Oswald of Dunniker, he kept up correspondence. Oswald, an eminent Glasgow merchant, was not only a practical man of business, but had thought much upon the details of political economy. From him Hume gained much of that knowledge of monetary affairs which appears in his

political essays. "I confess," he writes to Oswald, "'twas a little difference with you for neglecting me so long, but you have made ample compensation. This commerce, I find, is of advantage to both of us ; to me by the new light you communicate, and to you by giving you occasion to examine those subjects more accurately."

Hume seems now to have amused himself by a joke which he conspired with Col. Abercromby and Dr. Clephane, to play upon a Jacobite apothecary named Fraser, who had been their common acquaintance and comrade in the expedition under St. Clair. Good-natured as he was, the philosopher had little humor, and this effort at drollery upon which he bestowed much pains, would scarcely amuse the reader. An attempt of a satirical nature, "the Bellman's Petition," which he seems to have prized almost as much as the "Treatise," is little more entertaining. The "Petition" was written in ridicule of one sent to the legislature by the clergy and schoolmasters of Scotland, praying for an increase of salary ; Hume extends the claim to the bell-ringers, and urges it as follows :

"That as your petitioners serve in the quality of grave-diggers, the great use and necessity of their order in every well-ordered community, has never yet been called in question ; an advantage they possess above their brethren the clergy.

"That as your petitioners are but half ecclesiastics,

it may be expected they would not be altogether unreasonable nor exorbitant in their demands.

“That the present poverty of your petitioners in this kingdom is a scandal to all religion; it being easy to prove that a modern bellman is not more richly endowed than a primitive apostle, and, consequently, possesseth not the twentieth part of the revenues belonging to a Presbyterian clergyman, &c.”

This is poor satire after the sharp irony of Swift or the coarse parodies of Pope. Hume, however, was anxious to have it published, but the publishers of Edinburgh refused to print the treasured *morceaux* on the ground, probably, of its irreligious tendency. The author then circulated it among his friends. He writes to Dr. Clephane: “I must tell you that lately, in an idle hour, I wrote a sheet called the “Bellman’s Petition,” wherein (if I be not partial, which I certainly am) there was some pleasantry and satire.” He asks Clephane to read it to General St. Clair, and is evidently as pleased with his poor attempt as was Swift with his bad Latin verses on the “Carberry Rocks.”

He was now engaged upon his “Dialogue upon Natural Religion,” on which he had much correspondence with Gilbert Elliot, another valuable friend whom he had contrived to attach to himself. Elliot was afterwards a baronet, a member of the Scottish bar, member of Parliament, and treasurer of the navy;

but when Hume first knew him he was an aspiring young man, gifted with considerable literary talent. He was author of several popular verses and songs, besides possessing a philosophical and speculative turn of mind.

A change now took place in the routine of Hume's life, which, no doubt, had considerable influence upon his literary pursuits. Ninewells was no longer to be his home. His brother, the laird, after long celibacy, ventured upon marriage, and Hume and his sister, although kindly urged to remain at the family seat, resolved to form an establishment of their own. "Since my brother's departure," he writes, "Katty and I have been computing in our turn, and the result of our deliberations is, that we are to take up house in Berwick; where, if arithmetic and frugality don't deceive us (and they are pretty certain arts), we shall be able, after providing for hunger, warmth, and cleanliness, to keep a stock in reserve which we may afterwards turn either to the purposes of hoarding, luxury or charity."

It had always been Hume's desire to possess a small competence, upon which he might live with ease, without dependence or uncongenial labor. For this object he had practised every species of self-denial. He had avoided extravagance in dress, and all the allurements of gay society. Although placed by birth upon a level with those who lived with every indulgence, and although almost every one of his friends

and correspondents was far better off than himself, yet he carefully saved and hoarded until he had at last gathered together what to his few wants was a competent fortune. He boasts with real exultation, in his forty-first year, that he was now worth one thousand pounds.

The interest of this property was but fifty pounds a year, and upon this he was prepared to maintain himself. In a letter to his old friend and correspondent, Michael Ramsay, he thus unfolds his plans: "I might, perhaps, pretend, as well as others, to complain of fortune; but I do not, and should condemn myself as unreasonable if I did. While interest remains as at present, I have £50 a year, a hundred pounds' worth of books, great store of linen and fine clothes, and near £100 pounds in my pocket; along with order, frugality, a strong spirit of independency, good health, a contented humor, and an unabated love of study. In these circumstances I esteem myself one of the happy and fortunate; and so far from being willing to draw my ticket over again in the lottery of life, there are few prizes for which I would make an exchange. After some deliberation I am resolved to settle in Edinburgh, and hope I shall be able with these revenues, to say with Horace: '*Est bona librorum, et provisæ frugis in annum copiæ.*'"

His sister, who could add thirty pounds a year to the common fund for housekeeping, came up to Edinburgh to live with him, and there they formed their modest

establishment on a scale so economical, as could have satisfied no one but a philosopher. Even allowing for the difference in the value of money, and the cheapness of provisions in that day, it is difficult to imagine how Hume could have maintained his household on not more than four hundred dollars a year.

His residence was first in Riddell's Land, and then in Jack's Land, nearly opposite a tenement occupied by a rival author and historian, the misanthropic Smollet and his sister. The term "Land," denotes at Edinburgh, a house of ten or twelve stories, filled with various families, and resembling a French hotel. Hume, probably, hired a small "flat," or suit of rooms, suitable to his narrow income.

Enthroned in his new possessions, he began to exult to his friends as if he had been the possessor of ten thousand a year. The chief cause of this self-congratulation was the belief that he should now be enabled to execute his designs in history. This project had long filled his imagination; whenever he mentions the design in his letters, he always postpones it to the happy time when the little competency should have been frugally and painfully gathered, and he should be enabled to write at ease. That moment was at last come, and he now felt confident that he should produce a work which would not only raise his reputation, but materially increase his little fortune, an effect that had not followed from other writings. He thus expresses his joyous feelings of independence in a letter to Dr.

Clephane : “I shall exult and triumph to you a little that I have now at last, being turned of forty—to my own honor and that of learning, and to that of the present age, arrived at the dignity of being a householder. About seven months ago I got a house of my own, and completed a regular family ; consisting of a head, viz. : myself and two inferior members, a maid and a cat. My sister has since joined me and keeps me company. With frugality, I can reach, I find, cleanliness, warmth, light, plenty, and contentment. What would you have more ? Independence ?—I have it in a supreme degree. Honor ?—that is not altogether wanting. Grace ?—that will come in time. A wife ?—that is none of the indispensable requisites of life. Books ?—that is one of them, and I have more than I can use. In short, I cannot find any blessing of consequence which I am not possessed of in a greater or less degree, and without any great effort of philosophy, I may be easy and satisfied.”

In the winter of 1751 the professorship of Logic became vacant in the University of Glasgow, Adam Smith, who held it, having been placed in the chair of Moral Philosophy. And Hume once more aspired to a post which his former disappointments might have taught him he could never obtain. His progress towards renown, already so considerable, had only diminished his prospects of success, and even his warmest friends scarcely ventured to urge his pretensions to the place. Smith, in a letter to Dr. Cullen, says : “I should prefer

David Hume to any other man for a colleague ; but I am afraid the public would not be of my opinion, and the interest of the society will oblige me to have some regard to the opinion of the public. If the event, however, we are afraid of, should happen, we can see how the public receive it."

With his inquisitive and active genius, Hume must have made an admirable professor. He could have inspired and governed the minds of his pupils in philosophy, as he finally governed the intellect of his age, and he would have enjoyed the more deeply his own discoveries and speculations, where they were shared and diffused in daily lectures among the young and active intellects of his country. An instructor, to be successful, must be original, and himself continue a student and an inquirer instead of contenting himself with a repetition of ancient speculations. Kant and Fichte, more fortunate than their master, found the University of Berlin welcome them with joy among the ranks of its professors, but the Scottish philosopher, the greatest of his time, was sedulously excluded from all the colleges of his native country.

Edmund Burke, it is related, then a widely-read student of twenty three, was also an unsuccessful candidate for this professorship. It was fortunate for both the candidates that they were unsuccessful. Hume, amid the duties of his office, might have neglected the great history, and Burke a professor in a Scotch college, would never have entered Parliament. A person named Clow,

was the successful competitor against the two leading minds of the age.

Hume in a professor's chair, disseminating his opinions among a few students, must have gained far less influence than he finally obtained by the success of his writings. After many years of imperfect success, he now published a work that gained immediate popularity. In 1752 appeared his "Political Discourses." The public received them with delight. New opinions in politics, before the French Revolution, were popular among all classes of Englishmen. The tories went even beyond the whigs in their fondness for the new speculations. Hume's opinions on money, trade, and government, were generally adopted, and had not the excesses of the French Revolution alarmed and shocked the feelings of the nation, and driven it back into conservatism, England, a century ago, had adopted the principles of free trade and constitutional reform.

In France the "Discourses" passed through several editions, and aroused by their novel speculations, the deepest interest of the public mind. The little volume "*Sur le Commerce, le Luxe, l'Argent*," gave rise to a new phase of the French intellect. The study of political economy became fashionable with the best minds, and Hume was, in fact, the founder of a school of thinkers who, possessing none of the prudence of their master, led the way to the extreme opinions of the wildest revolutionists.

During all his various courses of study, Hume had

been perfecting his mind for historical composition, and he seems to have felt an instinctive assurance of success in that kind of writing. At Ninewells the want of books had kept him from making any progress in his design, and his removal to Edinburgh was probably determined by the hope of there finding libraries and materials of research. In 1752, the office of librarian to the advocates' library became vacant, and Hume's friends, he asserts, without his knowledge, set up his name as a candidate. The office was of little profit, being worth about forty or fifty pounds a year, but was peculiarly desirable for Hume, as it would give him the command of thirty thousand volumes. His nomination aroused the most violent hostility. The president, dean of the faculty, and his son, who had been accustomed to control the institution as they pleased, were strongly against him; and having set up as the rival candidate, a respectable advocate, they arrayed their whole party on that side. All who disliked Hume's free opinions joined them. The cry of deism and atheism was raised against him, and it was represented that his election would give the sanction of a grave and learned body to his principles. Meanwhile though his enemies were thus active, his friends had taken no means to insure his election. At last, however, they held a meeting, and concerted the necessary measures; the public sided with the philosopher, "assistance flocked to us from all quarters," writes Hume, "and I carried the

election by a considerable majority, to the great joy of all bystanders.

“What is more extraordinary,” he continues, “the cry of religion could not hinder the ladies from being violently my partisans, and I owe my success, in a great measure, to their solicitations. One has broken off all commerce with her lover, because he voted against me, and W. Lockhart, in a speech to the faculty, said that there was no walking the streets, nor even enjoying one’s own fireside, on account of their importunate zeal. The town says that even his bed was not safe for him, though his wife was cousin german to my antagonist. ’Twas vulgarly given out that the contest was betwixt deists and Christians; and when the news of my success came to the playhouse, the whisper ran that the Christians were defeated. Are you not surprised that we could keep our popularity, notwithstanding this imputation, which my friends could not deny to be well founded?”

According to Hume’s amusing and jocular account of this famous election, nothing since the rebellion, with the exception of a single trial, had so excited the good citizens of Edinburgh. On his side were ranked the fair, the fashionable and the learned, while his opponents were all the bigots, and a few personal foes. The whole body of cadies, the street porters of the town, brought flambeaux, and made an illumination on his success; and the next morning he was serenaded with drums and music.

There is no doubt that Hume was highly popular with a large portion of the society in Edinburgh. His good birth and amiable manners, his literary connections and growing fame, served to open the way for him to general notice. His early friends, Oswald, Mure, Kames, and Glasgow, Sir Gilbert Elliot and Lord Elibank, were all moving in the highest society and were men whose talents gave them a weight which no other advantage could have bestowed. With St. Clair, Erskine, Edmonstone, and Abercromby, persons of a different but equally respectable class, he retained a friendship which they were always willing to prove by advancing his interests whenever it was in their power. His acquaintance with the clergy had ever been extensive. The Scottish kirk was now divided into two parties, one of which, called the "moderate," was led by Robertson, the principal of the University, and a rival historian; the other, the "highflyers," or rigid Presbyterians, who opposed every relaxation of the ancient rule of the Covenant, by Erskine. From these last came the denunciation of Henry Home, for writing a tragedy, of Dr. Carlyle, for attending a theatre; and, finally, an attempt to excommunicate Hume himself for his liberal opinions.

With the moderates Hume soon fell into intimacy. Robertson, who had not yet published his histories, and who was known only as a popular preacher and an active leader in the clerical assemblies, but who had already long cherished the hope of literary fame, received

the rising author with ready appreciation, and caught from him an ardor for historical composition. Hugh Blair, too, then famous for pulpit eloquence, was fascinated by Hume's peculiar powers, became his friend, and shows in his own writings the influence of the philosopher's taste. With many other eminent Scotch divines, Hume was equally familiar, meeting them frequently in society and joining in their friendly reunions; both parties, probably, feeling the unsuitableness of the connection, yet unwilling to break the uneasy tie that linked them together.

A suspicion has arisen from this intimacy of the great infidel with the liberal churchmen, that the moderates were infected with the principles of their associate; that Robertson, the popular divine, and Blair, the author of sermons, which are yet the delight of all Christians, were daily engaged in teaching doctrines which they secretly despised. This charge was brought against them by the rigid party in their own day; and the total loss of Robertson's correspondence, which, it has been alleged, was destroyed to prevent a discovery of this wide-spread infidelity among the Scottish clergy, has given some weight to the charge with posterity. Later researches, however, have shown that it was wholly groundless, and that Hume's intercourse with those eminent divines, however intimate, was never free from an uneasiness excited by the consciousness of a total dissimilarity in religious principles.

The following letter from Blair, who had forwarded

to him Dr. Campbell's reply to his "Essay on Miracles," shows that he must often have been annoyed by the professional zeal of his clerical friends. "Having said so much to your friend," Hume writes, "permit me also the freedom of saying a word to yourself. Whenever I have had the pleasure to be in your company, if the discourse turned on any common subject of literature or reasoning, I always parted from you both entertained and instructed. But when the conversation was directed by you from this channel towards the subject of your profession, I own I never received the same satisfaction. I was apt to grow tired, and you to be angry. I would therefore wish, for the future, whenever my good fortune throws me in your way, that these topics should be forborne between us. I have long since done with all inquiries on such subjects, and am become incapable of instruction; though I own no one is more capable of giving it than yourself." This strain of complaint, however, Hume, conscious of the delicate position which he held at Edinburgh, does not venture to indulge until in the height of his fame at Paris, from whence he writes.

His popularity in Edinburgh arose chiefly from his engaging qualities. He carried into society a constant good humor and a willingness to amuse and be amused, that few beside him could equal, and by his associates was looked upon rather as a pleasing companion than as the great genius who was revolutionizing his age. Every one spoke of him as "Honest David Hume."

His gross, good-natured countenance, and his fondness for jokes and laughter, his constant pleasantry and good humored raillery, seem to have convinced all the ladies and many of his strongest opponents, that there could be nothing so very wicked in him after all.

But beside his social qualities, Hume was known to be a man of the purest morals. No one among his bitterest foes could ever excite even a doubt of his purity. The beautiful character of La Roche, in Mackenzie's touching story, shows in what general esteem he was held by his contemporaries. His frugality, charity, modesty, and willingness to oblige, won the respect of those who must otherwise have viewed him with horror as an infidel. "Our philosopher," writes Mackenzie, "has been censured by some as deficient in warmth of feeling, but the mildness of his manners has been allowed by all; and it is certain, that if he was not easily melted into compassion, it was, at least, not difficult to awaken his benevolence." Few of his friends but had felt his willingness to assist them in their difficulties, and it was well known that his charities were out of all proportion to the scanty income on which he himself subsisted.

Hume was now seated in his librarian's chair, in the midst of thirty thousand books and manuscripts, composing his History of England. Meanwhile he was not permitted by his enemies to remain perfectly at his ease. He had not long been in office, before a charge was made against him, by Sir David Dalrymple and other

curators of the library, of having introduced into it improper books. They fixed upon three French novels, "Les Contes" of "La Fontaine," being one, and ordered them to be struck from the catalogue; and, as a further indignity, they resolved that no books should in future be introduced, except they had been approved by a meeting of the curators.

Highly displeased as he was at this open affront, Hume could not well resign the post that gave him access to his materials. He applied to the faculty for redress, and when they treated his application with neglect, he made over the salary of the office to Blacklock, the blind poet, in order to indicate his motive for not immediately resigning.

He must have written incessantly during the first year of his librarianship, to have so soon prepared the first volume of his history for the press. Early in 1753, he thus announces his progress to Dr. Clephane: "As there is no happiness without occupation, I have begun a work which will employ me several years, and which yields me much satisfaction. 'Tis a History of Great Britain from the Union of the Crowns to the present time. I have already finished the reign of King James. My friends flatter me (by this I mean that they don't flatter me) that I have succeeded. You know there is no post of honor in the English Parnassus more vacant than that of history: Style, judgment, impartiality, care, everything is wanting to our historians; and even Rapin, during this latter period, is extremely deficient. I make my work very concise, after the manner of the

ancients. It divides into three very moderate volumes: one to end with Charles the First, the second at the Revolution, the third at the accession, for I dare come no nearer the present times. The work will neither please the Duke of Bedford nor James Fraser, but I hope it will please you and posterity. *Κτήμα εἰς ὄελ.*" The first volume he seems to have written with the zeal of one certain of success. Great practice in writing had given him an easy style in which his thoughts flowed out clearly and without labor, and his chief difficulty must have been in the collection and comparison of his authorities. In this he is generally supposed to have been remiss, yet those who have taken pains to follow him in his inquiries have found that he has never invented facts but rather built up his peculiar theories by an artful arrangement of them.

He was constantly asking the advice of his friends in regard to his work. On matters of finance he consulted James Oswald, the Glasgow merchant, and to him he writes for an explanation of the "old English subsidy." In a letter to Dr. Clephane, he consults him as to the propriety of using the word "enow" and begs him not only to give him his own opinion, but to consult with the English in relation to it. His singular nicety of taste led him into a constant dread of Scotticisms, against which he could never sufficiently guard himself, and we find him, at a later period, begging Mallet to expunge from his history all those unlucky traces of his northern origin.

One amiable feature in his character was the ready

patronage which he extended to all rising authors, and the zeal with which he helped all those that were poor and struggling. His earliest protégé was Blacklock, the blind poet. Hume professed himself delighted with Blacklock's verses, and touched by his melancholy condition, he labored with uncommon earnestness to obtain him a support. This poet was certainly a remarkable character. Notwithstanding his blindness, he had contrived to acquire Latin, Greek, and French ; his verses, if not powerful, were tasteful and melodious, and his manners simple and engaging.

When Blacklock was about to retire to Dumfries, Hume wrote a letter to Matthew Sharp of Hoddam, recommending the poet to his attention, and pressing him to purchase a number of copies of his poems, as well as to aid him in all ways in his power. Another letter which he wrote to Spence, the companion of Pope, in relation to the publication of Blacklock's poems at London, is one of the best and most labored of all his correspondence. He relates in a touching manner the first interview he had had with the blind poet. They had met almost twelve years before, when the poet had just commenced the Latin. Hume happening to have Pope's elegy to the memory of an unfortunate lady, by heart, repeated it to Blacklock. He was greatly affected and his whole body was agitated by the violence of his feelings. They did not meet again until 1754, when Hume requested Blacklock to visit him, and was charmed to notice his progress in the languages, and his excellences

in poetry. He seems now to have made him a subject of intellectual inquiry, to have watched the operation of his mind under the deprivation of sight, and to have been interested and instructed by the singular views he expressed of color, light, scenery, and the passions. He endeavored to raise a subscription for the purpose of supporting him for five years, and laments that he had only been able to obtain twelve guineas among all his acquaintance, and had met with refusals from persons in whose generosity he had perfectly confided. He then attempted to get a bursary or scholarship of ten pounds a year for the poet, but found that they were jealously kept by the nobility for the support of the sons of their valets and nurses. Finally he became himself, Blacklock's munificent benefactor, by giving up to him the salary of his librarianship, while he steadily discharged whatever duties were connected with it.

So unpopular was Hume in England, and so personally disagreeable to Spence, that he avoided, in his preface to Blacklock's poems, all mention of the Scottish philosopher, and left his zealous kindness wholly unacknowledged.

In this letter to Spence, Hume also recommends to his notice John Home, the author of *Douglas*, as one of the most promising poets of the day, expressing the hope that he will yet vindicate the English stage from the reproach of barbarism.

By Sept. 1, 1754, Hume announces to Dr. Clephane

the near publication of the History, and cries "*Jamque opus exegi.*" Before the close of the year the first volume came out, a quarto of four hundred and seventy three pages. It contained the reigns of James the First and Charles the First.

Hume evidently pleased himself with the hope that it would have perfect success. He had assumed an air of philosophic impartiality which he thought must satisfy all parties and offend none. He had chosen an interesting epoch which had never been properly treated, and which was filled with striking political problems, of deep importance to every Englishman. His competitors in the field of English history, could hardly be feared as rivals. They made no pretence to impartiality, and had no recommendations of style or matter. The coarse violence of Oldmixon, or the blind bigotry of Salmon or Carte, could have no claims to the notice of persons of taste. But since Addison, no writer had written in so pure a style as Hume, and even Addison had scarcely equalled him in the art of relating incidents in a clear and graceful manner.

In the account of his own life, Hume relates the disappointment that overwhelmed him on the publication of his first volume. It was received he asserts "with one cry of reproach, of disapprobation, and even of detestation." All parties, sects, and classes of men, seemed to unite in condemning the unfortunate production, and what was worse, the bookseller informed him that in a twelve-month he sold only forty five copies.

This statement, however, can only refer to London, and the whole narrative is a strange exaggeration of the real case. So far from selling only a few copies, he tells Adam Smith, soon after the publication, that at Edinburgh, the work had a very great sale. An edition was soon after printed at Dublin, and a translation was immediately prepared at Paris.

Yet Hume continues in his "Life," "I was, I confess, discouraged, and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more returned to my native country."

Such desponding language is unworthy of the philosopher, and was entirely uncalled for by the fate of his work. Yet it shows that Hume's expectations, encouraged by the success of the "Discourses," had been greatly raised and excited, and that he had indulged in visions, with regard to the History, as grand as those that had seduced him, when a young man, from his retreat at La Flèche to the publishers at London. By this effort he had hoped to rise at once above the common walks of literature, and to be acknowledged as one of the master intellects of the age; and he believed that he had now established a just claim to universal admiration and regard. What he felt to be his due he was apt to demand clamorously and importunately; and he now demanded from the public a just appreciation.

But the time had not yet come. He was doomed to linger some years longer among the inferior paths of letters. "Miserable," he exclaims, "was my disappointment;" and the expression does not, probably, exaggerate the revulsion of feeling which he experienced, when from his dream of wide popularity and perfect success, he was suddenly startled by the cry of disapprobation and disgust which reached him from all sides. The whigs reproached him as a deserter from those liberal opinions which he had so lately professed; the extreme tories could not hear a word against their idol, the martyred Charles. Churchmen were shocked by the levity with which he treated the Establishment; sectaries, by the sneers which he cast upon their eccentricities; and papists, by his quiet ridicule of their highest mysteries. No book was ever more fitted to startle prejudices and to arouse hostilities of the bitterest kind, than the first volume of the History. Pretending to impartiality, it could plainly be seen that the author had been ruled by prejudices as strong as those of Carte or Clarendon. Of all species of religion he could never speak without disguised but still palpable contempt. In politics he masked the most violent Jacobite sentiments under a thin coloring of philosophical deduction. Yet could he not avoid throwing into his political sketches some lines of detestation for the tyrannical monarch, and some faint admiration for the energetic and unyielding Parliament. With his clear and profound views of political economy, it was impos-

sible that Hume could approve of the commercial and monetary policy of the Stuarts, or avoid seeing the national evils that sprang from their profuse monopolies, their arbitrary exactions, and their constant interference with the natural laws of trade. These opinions he frequently displayed; and in the pride of philosophy, he had written with a constant disregard of the prejudices prevailing around him, and in opposition to the cherished sentiments of almost every one of his readers.

Having offended all parties, what should Hume have expected? It is plain that he was not conscious of his own imprudence. While printing those theories that had amused his studious moments, or painting those delicately finished characters which have won the interest of generations of readers, he was wholly ignorant that he was giving deadly offence to his contemporaries. Accustomed himself, for many years, to assume a philosophical abstraction upon all matters of discussion, he seems to have given the public, of the most bigoted age since the first revolution, the credit of equal tolerance. When parties were fiercely contending for office upon the most opposite principles, while not many years had passed since the extreme of one side had rushed into rebellion to replace an exiled king, and when the leaders of the other were fiercely asserting the power and rights of the people, Hume professed a belief that he could please both factions by sitting in judgment upon their common faults. And when he had produced a philosophic caricature of high churchmen, in the

account which he gives of Laud, bowing and grovelling before the sacred elements at the consecration of a chapel; or of the Puritan breaking church windows and canting from vacant pulpits; when he had coldly smiled at the purest piety as enthusiasm, and had thrown a doubt upon the existence of all religious sincerity, he hoped, in the simplicity of his nature, that he should please all parties. These expectations, founded upon his own habit of abstract contemplation, betray the secret enthusiasm of his nature. He, too, like the world around him, was borne away by a single passion, and saw all things in the light which fell discolored from his own mind. With his firm faith in the power of literature, he believed that party spirit would be awed, and religious prejudices silenced, by the influence of a work of genius. He was to tame and subdue his age. By a single spell he would check the fierce torrent of public opinion, and produce an universal calm in which nothing should be heard but the voice of reason constructing new schemes of government, or of pity lamenting over a dead king.

With these strange expectations, Hume gave his fair work to the public. The "*Κτήμα εις αεί*," as he calls it, in a letter to Clephane—the possession of future ages—found hardly a voice raised in its favor. Not a man of any rank or importance in letters or politics ventured to speak well of it, with the exception of the Primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the Primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone. These two eminent churchmen took the pains

to write to the author not to be discouraged. Yet it is difficult to discover why these dignitaries of the church were inclined to sustain the skeptical author; they could hardly approve of his manner of treating the Establishment; his politics must have been inexplicable to them, and they are not likely to have discovered the artistic execution of the work. Something, however, pleased them, and their faint encouragement—an odd exception, as Hume remarks—cheered him amid the general disapprobation.

Like many other of Hume's speculations, those with regard to his History have been fulfilled. The cherished work, so hardly treated in its own age, has produced all the effect anticipated by its author. Whig and tory now unite in praising its matchless style, and its wonderful narrative, its acute political reasoning, and the truth of many of its deductions. Emerging slowly from the clamor and abuse which surrounded its first appearance, it has risen before the world to a position of unbounded influence. Few thoughtful minds but delight to form themselves in that intellectual arena which its doubts, speculations, political argument, and delicate moral painting, afford. Generations of statesmen and scholars have been led by its guidance not into skepticism or Jacobitism, but into a more liberal view of all subjects of thought. They have applied the philosophical calmness recommended by the author to his own production, and have carefully weighed his theories un-seduced by the ardent skepticism which marks them,

and the political intolerance which he sometimes paradoxically defends.

Hume's anxiety to hear from all quarters the effect of his work was intense. "Pray, tell me," he writes to Adam Smith, "and tell me ingenuously, what success my History met with among the judges with you. I mean Dr. Cullen, Mr. Betham, Mr. Leichman, Mr. Muirhead, Mr. Crawford, &c. Dare I presume that it has been thought worthy of examination, and that its beauties are found to overbalance its defects? I am very desirous to know my errors; and I dare swear you think me tolerably docile to be so veteran an author?" He was thus eager to know the opinion of the Glasgow critics, having made tolerably sure of Edinburgh by the large sale of the work. Four hundred and fifty copies were sold in five weeks. But the applause of Scotland was as nothing compared to the uncertainty and alarm with which he looked forward to the decision of the London critics.

His fear was, that he must remain for ever a provincial author, famous, indeed, in his own land, but imprisoned by national prejudice and a defective style to that narrow field. Hence the eagerness with which he sought to banish Scotticisms and to avoid all national allusions. Hating the English intensely, to them he was to look for the perpetuation of his fame, and as he came before that hostile tribunal, he sought to remove every blemish upon which the keenest criticism might fasten. This care, no doubt, added to the classical

purity of his style, and the simplicity of his narrative. But it quenched every gleam of enthusiasm. Writing with the feeling that keen eyes were watching for every trace of nationality with ready ridicule, Hume endeavored to forget wholly that he was a Scot, born beneath the same sky that looked upon Bannockburn. He succeeded; and there is hardly a trace of Scottish feeling in Scotland's greatest work.

The London critics, before whom he thus abased himself, had fallen far below that eminence which they had attained in the days of Halifax and Addison. The Moores and Mallets, the Colmans and Thorntons, were persons of narrow taste, and of no philosophical acquirement, of little independence of thought, and of no power of discernment. They were capable, perhaps, of pointing out the glaring merits of the imitators of Pope and Addison, and could detect an infringement upon the established rules of taste; but want of native ability and of original research had wholly unfitted them to perceive the subtle excellences of a work like that of Hume. National and political prejudice, too, conspired to blind them to its value. The English critics were chiefly whigs. Johnson and Goldsmith were yet hardly known: and Chesterfield and Lyttleton, the successors of Halifax and Somers, had collected around them a band of literary dependents, who made up for deficiency in talent by political zeal. Under the Georges the esteem in which literature was lately held had been sunk in the strife of parties; while men of let-

ters had not yet under the guidance of the unconquerable Johnson, stood forth a peculiar and powerful class.

But Hume had a still worse fault in the eyes of the degenerate literary circles of the capital—he was a Scot. The English, unconscious of the approach of that intellectual revolution which was to transfer to the north the praise of mental supremacy, were still shut up in their national prejudices; they did not believe that a Scot could possibly write pure English: they never suspected that a national literature could ever flourish among their poor and obscure neighbours. Thompson and Mallet, it is true, had already gained a reputation in London; but it was by abandoning their native country to become Englishmen. Had they remained in Edinburgh, they must have sunk beneath the contempt by which Hume was so nearly overwhelmed.

When the Scottish author, therefore, presented himself before the London critics, professing to teach impartiality to history, and to demand attention in the name of philosophy and truth, his claims were derided as preposterous. The narrow vision of his enemies detected one or two small blemishes in his admirable style, and declared him incapable of writing English. They covered him with ridicule as a pretender to literature, who had failed in its very elements. When, upon close scrutiny, they could find little else to decry, they fell upon his skepticism and high toryism; and the faint

applause which he had won at home, was soon drowned in the universal clamor and reproach with which he was assailed in the capital.

This was the disappointment which Hume felt so keenly; and which, he relates on his dying bed, nearly drove him in shame and despair to abandon his country for ever; and, under an assumed name, to hide himself in some obscure retreat abroad. To London the provincial author had looked for just renown, and there the best critics had conspired to cover him with neglect and contempt. There in a twelvemonth only forty-five copies of the *History* were sold; there he had been called a skeptic worse than Bolingbroke; and a Jacobite worse than Carte; and, what was far more disheartening to the sensitive writer, than any charge of Jacobitism or skepticism, there it was decided that he could not write the English language. In all this hostile criticism, the whigs were the loudest and most active, and Hume remembered it to his grave: the tories were less unfavorable, and he was ever after grateful.

A Jacobite, Lord Balcarras, wrote him a complimentary letter, with an invitation to Balcarras Castle. The earl had engaged in the rebellion of 1715, and since that time had felt the displeasure of the court. He retired to his estate in Scotland, where he gave himself to literature and rural improvements. In the general disapprobation, Hume felt the commendation

deeply, and repaid it gratefully by inclining more plainly, in his later writings, to the party to which Balcarras belonged.

The failure of his first volume depressed the confidence with which Hume had hitherto written. He could no longer look forward to that universal applause which he had lately promised himself, or to that rapid sale which was to improve his fortune. Still, however, he went on with the work. The veteran author needed employment, and his History filled and lightened many hours. He was now occupied with the reigns of the last Stuarts—Charles II. and James II. And with these, he tells Millar, his publisher, the whigs will be better pleased. He is evidently willing to bend a little before public opinion, and has not yet steeled himself into a philosophic apathy. It was not until he had conquered popular clamor that he learned to despise it. Charles and James, too, he thought less excusable than their predecessors, because they knew better the limits of their power.

To Millar, a Scottish bookseller, who had settled in the capital, Hume had intrusted the publishing of his History, which he was to push into notice by all the arts of the trade. The second volume appeared in 1756, but with no flattering prospect of success. And, so discouraged and disheartened was the author, that he now meditated giving up the subject wholly, and abandoning his apparently hopeless effort to attain historical renown. Millar proposed to him a translation

of Plutarch; and, as he had always a great admiration of the Greek biographer, in common with almost every eminent mind, Hume seems to have been willing, for a good consideration, to exchange the office of historian for that of translator. But he did little more than make a commencement, and soon grew weary. "The little trial I have made," he writes to Millar, "convinces me that the undertaking will require time. My manner of composing is slow, and I have great difficulty to satisfy myself."

John Home had now written that well-known tragedy which drew upon him the censures of the Scottish kirk. He was Hume's cousin, and had sent him his play for his correction. Hume, an ardent admirer of Sophocles and Racine, was a dangerous critic for a young dramatist. He seems to have led Home to abandon the study of Shakspeare, in whose nature and ease he had learned to delight, and to imitate the sound and dignity of the French authors. The Douglass has all the declamation of the Parisian stage, with none of the natural feeling of the better English dramatists. But Hume was enthusiastic in its praise. He never lost an opportunity of proclaiming its author the greatest tragic writer of the age, and one who would reform and elevate the English stage. In a letter to Home, he points out many faults of character and plot, and shows a consciousness of its great deficiencies, but everywhere in public he spoke of it as a wonderful production. Never was moderate ability more highly praised than in this signal

instance; and if Hume, and all whom he could bring over to his opinion, were to be trusted, Scotland had now produced a tragic writer more gifted than Shakspeare and with none of Shakspeare's barbarisms.

This excessive praise, which Hume had now begun to extend to all Scottish authors, sprang from two impulses. One was a sincere love for literature, and a desire to cherish and foster the rising genius of his country. He had long felt the want of sympathizers in the course of life which he had chosen for himself. Almost alone among his countrymen, he had looked for support and eminence to letters; after a gallant struggle he had obtained what to him was victory. He had gained a competence, and had risen to be the most noted man of letters at Edinburgh. For whatever London might say, he was sure of the support of the most intellectual circles of his own land. But while thus rejoicing in his own success, he was still solitary and unsupported. The press of Scotland brought forth no works of importance but his own. Hume longed, with the ardor of a master, to surround himself with disciples, to see poets, philosophers, and critics spring up at Edinburgh, who should owe to him much of their reputation, and on whom he could rely for defence and support. Hopeless of gaining admittance into the jealous circle of London authors, he resolved to gather around himself a group of writers more famous than England could produce. His strong love for Scotland urged him to persevere. Convinced of the grandeur of literature, and of the splendid destiny

of the man of letters, he could hardly feel satisfied while his native land still wanted this crowning ornament.

But another impulse moved him. The scorn with which he had been treated by the English critics had aroused his lasting resentment, and as he was conscious of their want of genius, he despised as much as he disliked them. Literature among the English was, in his eyes, wholly sunk and disregarded, nor did he believe that the Muses would ever again revisit "the commercial barbarians upon the banks of the Thames." Henceforth the English were to be given up to the vulgar strife of parties, to the accumulation of gain, and were destined to become the willing slaves of those superior intellects who were springing up in the more gifted regions of the north.

Hume, therefore, boldly resolved to make Edinburgh the intellectual capital of the empire. He would retort the scorn of the London critics by proving them wholly wanting in taste, art and genius, and scarcely to be compared with the writers of his own land. He resolved to discover a Milton in every Scottish poet, a Sophocles in every dramatist. He hailed Home and Wilkie as poets unrivalled in their generation; encouraged Blair and Robertson with praises better deserved; allured Smith and Kames into the difficult paths of philosophy; and lost no opportunity, in his letters to his countrymen or to his French correspondents, to characterize the English as fast sinking into barbarism, and his own

countrymen as gaining a plain ascendancy over their degenerate neighbors.

But while bravely preparing to carry the war into the enemy's country, Hume was hardly certain of a sure refuge in his own. The wider his fame, the more uncomfortable grew his situation. An avowed skeptic, he was now moving in the society of a Presbyterian capital, where toleration to open infidelity had never before been known. Hume, blind as he was to most of the unpleasant consequences of his position, could not but feel that to his warmest friends and supporters he must have become an uncomfortable companion. There was little that Jardine or Blair could say in defence of their constant intercourse with a writer so dangerous to the cause of religion. They could hardly defend him against the public odium without danger to themselves, and in fact suffered considerably on this account without abating their friendship. What excuse could they give to zealous Christians for their countenance of the worst enemy of Christianity, or how could they continue to love and honor a man whose principles they believed so fatal and deadly?

Towards Hume, therefore, although they met him with constant kindness and aided him with all their influence, they still preserved a kind of reserve, and he must always have felt that he came into their society upon sufferance, against the opinion of the world, and perhaps to their real injury. Men of letters themselves,

his clerical companions were willing to suffer in the public esteem, for the sake of his agreeable conversation. But they carefully avoided every act that might indicate any unity of feeling or purpose with one so notoriously a skeptic.

An instance of this occurred in 1755, when the first *Edinburgh Review* was projected, the original of that famous periodical which has marked a revolution in modern literature. It was suggested by the most intimate of Hume's friends, and among the contributors were Robertson, Smith, Jardine, and Blair; but to the chief literary man of Edinburgh the design of the work was never mentioned, nor was he asked to become a contributor. The meaning of this must have been plain to Hume, although Makenzie, who relates the incident, kindly seeks to attribute the neglect to another cause. When the first number appeared, Hume was still ignorant of its authors, and expressed to his friends his surprise at its excellence. They then thought it necessary to reveal the secret to him at a dinner given by one of the number. When Hume again expressed his wonder at the excellence of the new review, one of the party said he knew the authors, and would give him their names on his taking an oath of secrecy. Hume pleasantly asked how the oath was to be taken by a man accused of skepticism like himself, but said he would swear by the *το καλον* and the *το τρεπον* never to betray the secret. They then gave him the names of

the reviewers ; but his friends must have counted much upon his good nature, when they hoped thus to deceive and neglect him without offence.

Besides instances like this, which indicated to Hume the peculiarity of his position, a more open and public attack was soon to fall upon him. The extreme party of the Presbyterians had always shrunk from him with every mark of abhorrence. They had never yielded to the charms of his disposition, the purity of his character, or the theory of mutual toleration which he would have made the creed of all authors. Their zeal against the moderates, who were Hume's friends, hastened their action. They hoped, by casting reproach upon the infidel philosopher, to overwhelm Blair, Jardine, and Robertson in his disgrace ; and they resolved to bring Hume, with his friend Lord Kames, before the Ecclesiastical Court.

The offence of Lord Kames was in their eyes worse than that of his associate. He had written a treatise in opposition to the opinions of Hume, in which he had not only submitted faith to the test of reason, but had treated his opponent in a delicate and friendly manner. Although the essay closed with a prayer, and was evidently the work of a sincere believer, the extreme party could not forgive its moderation. It was more dangerous, they asserted, than the open infidelity of Hume.

The Rev. George Anderson, a divine of nearly eighty years of age, zealous and noisy, led the assault. He first published a pamphlet against the work of Lord

Kames, and two years after made an appeal to the general assembly against the writings of Sopho (Kames) and David Hume, Esq. He attempted to convict them of advocating theories leading to gross immorality: he charged that they taught that "all distinction between virtue and vice was imaginary;" that "adultery is very lawful, but sometimes not expedient;" and these and similar charges he sustained by passages taken from their writings.

Edinburgh was alive with the contest. It is not difficult to imagine the interest which the inhabitants of a dull provincial city would take in a dispute in which her most eminent men were engaged. Pamphlets on both sides rapidly followed each other. An anonymous author, replied to Anderson's "analysis," by convicting him of extracting improperly, and mistaking the meaning of his opponent. His friends answered by such taking tracts as, "The Deist stretched on his Death-bed, or a lively portraiture of a Dying Infidel," and these the moderates ridiculed in the anonymous Edinburgh Review.

We can hardly wonder at the violence with which this contest was carried on. The idea of toleration, to all modes of belief, to Popery, to infidelity, and the grossest heresies, was wholly unfamiliar to the public of Scotland an hundred years ago. A few eminent spirits, in advance of the age, were now endeavoring to familiarize it to their countrymen. Robertson, Smith, and Hume, the leaders in this movement, seem to have carried with

them the public favor. But they could not hope to effect their object without fierce opposition. Even many wise and excellent men still believed that the Covenant should be the law of the land, and held, with rigid faith, the obsolete creed of their fathers. The chief of this party was Erskine, a preacher of great power, nobly born, a gentleman, and a man of great erudition. To Erskine, the gradual rise of Hume in esteem and influence was an omen fatal to Christianity. He seemed to think that all who associated with the philosopher or who were willing to treat him with common humanity, were sharers in his peculiar principles. A large party went with Erskine, among whom were some from whom a more liberal sentiment might have been expected. Lord Monboddo, the learned and eccentric scholar, and Lord Hailes, the eminent judge, were both among Hume's persecutors.

The matter was brought before the general assembly of 1755; it passed a resolution, expressing its abhorrence of infidelity, and pronouncing all skeptical writings a disgrace to the age and nation.

This general assembly was conspicuous for its violence. It commenced an attack upon John Home, for writing "The Douglas," which drove him from the church. It publicly rebuked Dr. Carlyle for having attended a play, and for the same offence, suspended the Rev. Wm. White for a month, from his ministerial duties. It was now engaged in an assault upon the rising literature of Scotland. Meanwhile the Scottish kirk exhibited a

painful spectacle of party violence. So simple an affair as the introduction of a new style of music had rent the church with the most violent dissensions. In the course of the dispute scenes of disorder were enacted by the members of the kirk, such as can hardly be believed. Frequently a congregation assembled for worship, would divide into two parties, one of which persisted in using the old method, while the other was as equally resolute in maintaining the new, and the church would be filled with their rival and discordant voices. It was usual for the two factions to meet some time before the hour of service to practise their opposing strains. They would then rush into the church prepared for a contest. When the psalm was given out, the struggle of voices began and pastor and clerk united in the musical contest. Blows and curses were not unfrequently exchanged by the impassioned singers, and in many parts of the country, serious disturbances broke out from this singular cause. The infidel, meantime, now came frequently to the church, where he had been seldom seen before, to witness and enjoy the folly of his opponents.

Anderson and his friends, encouraged by the general condemnation passed upon Hume, endeavored to proceed further. They urged the assembly to point him out by name as a person dangerous to morals and religion, and to summon him before them. The following resolution was prepared and passed through the committee of overture. "The general assembly, judging it

their duty to do all in their power to check the growth and progress of infidelity, and considering that as infidel writings have begun of late years to be published in this nation, against which they have hitherto only testified in general, so there is one person styling himself David Hume, Esq., who hath arrived at such a degree of boldness as publicly to avow himself the author of books containing the most rude and open attacks upon the glorious gospel of Christ, and principles evidently subversive even of natural religion, and the foundations of morality, if not establishing direct atheism, therefore the assembly appoint the following persons as a committee to inquire into the writings of this author, to call him before them, and prepare the matter for the next general assembly."

The fierce spirit of the days of the Solemn League and Covenant was now, however, modified by the humane influence of advancing knowledge. The moderates and Hume's friends met the resolution with sneers and ridicule. It was lost by fifty to seventeen votes. Anderson died of his defeat, but closed his career consistently by endeavoring to direct the censures of the church upon the printers and publishers of Kames' essay. Just before he died he published a last pamphlet against the skeptics, entitled "The complaint of George Anderson, minister of the Gospel." While occupied with this assault upon Hume and Kames at Edinburgh, he had also published at London several pamphlets against Bolingbroke and Mallet. At last, in his eightieth year,

the fiery old man died, and the proceedings against Hume were dropped.

Hume, therefore, was not excommunicated. He hardly noticed the assault made upon him, except to smile and to ask Smith what would be the effect of excommunication. In his own life he does not mention the attack which was so bitterly urged against him. Yet, although now in his forty-fifth year, he must have felt that he could hardly count upon Edinburgh as a home. Since the loss of the little nook at Ninewells, he had never been perfectly at his ease. In his native land he could scarcely look for peace. Confidently as he had set himself up as a mark for persecution, and pleased as he professes himself to have been with the attacks made upon his writings, he could not but have felt a pang mingled with the pleasure.

Even at Edinburgh, too, and among his own circle, he had not yet attained that eminence which would console him for reproach. He was rather viewed as an amusing companion than as an oracle and a guide. His society in general was tolerated for his agreeable qualities rather than sought as an honor and a privilege. Reasonable as Hume usually was, in the exalted view which he took of the position of the man of letters, he seems to have exceeded common sense. He was right in thinking literature the highest of all pursuits, but he erred in expecting all men to acknowledge this truth immediately. He expected from society an adoration which it was not yet prepared to give to mere literary power. It was

the duty, he thought, of the great, the gay, and the fashionable to court the attention of the man of letters, and when Blair recommended to him, in Paris, some friends from Edinburgh, Hume petulantly hints that as they had not sought his society at home, he was not bound to do them favors abroad. Evidently, he felt that sufficient honor had not been done him in his native city.

He was now thinking of seeking a new home. But where should he go? The cities of his own country were even less attractive than its capital; in hostile London he would hardly have a friend. His recollections of France seem to have been ever agreeable, and in a letter to Dr. Clephane, he thus expresses his present condition and future hopes: "It gives me great affliction, dear doctor, when you speak of gout and old age. Alas! you are going down hill and I am tumbling fast after you. I have, however, very entire health, notwithstanding my studious, sedentary life. I only grow fat more than I could wish. When shall I see you? God knows. I am settled here, have no pretensions, nor helps, nor desires, to carry me to court the great. I live frugally on a small fortune, which I care not to dissipate by jaunts of pleasure. All these circumstances give me little prospect of seeing London. Were I to change my habitation, I would retire to some provincial town in France, to trifle out my old age, near a warm sun, in a good climate, a pleasant country, and amidst a sociable people. My stock would then main-

tain me in some opulence ; for I have the satisfaction to tell you, dear doctor, that on reviewing my affairs, I find that I am worth £1,600 sterling, which, at five per cent., makes near 1,800 livres a year—that is the pay of two French captains.”

This dream of a French paradise where warmth, cheapness and fresh air—to Hume the chief elements of happiness—should combine to give him rest, often recurs in the course of his correspondence. Yet the closing portion of his life was destined to be spent among far different scenes. Twenty years of hard literary labor and of poor requital had gone by ; the meridian of his life had come ; he was soon to obtain the highest gifts of fortune, wealth, office, and an almost unprecedented fame. No English writer has ever possessed so great a contemporary reputation among all foreign nations as that which Hume was finally to obtain.

The second volume of his History rose slowly in reputation. Before its publication Hume had looked around for some established critic who would go over it carefully and erase all Scotticisms. The person upon whom he fixed to do him this good office was David Mallet, a Scottish poet, who had established himself in London.

Mallet was something of a charlatan and something of an author : on coming to London he had changed his name from the humbler Malloch to the honorable one by which he is generally known. He followed literature

chiefly as a means of introducing himself to the noble and the distinguished. A panegyric had made him acquainted with Pope. Through him he was introduced to Bolingbroke, to whom he recommended himself by his infidelity. And when Bolingbroke died, Mallet was appointed by his will to edit his works. By singular dexterity and boldness Mallet had forced himself into a wide acquaintance with the nobility, and had become a ruling power in the world of letters. His wife was a worthy companion of the literary impostor. They both professed deism, and by their bustling impertinence contrived to maintain their importance. Mallet received five thousand pounds by the Duchess of Marlborough's will for writing the life of her husband, the great duke, of which he never wrote a line; and was also secretary to the Prince of Wales, with a salary of £200.

To this literary pretender Hume consented to humiliate himself in order to obtain his corrections of his style, and perhaps with the hope of securing one favorable voice at the hostile capital. He wrote him a letter to which he received no answer. Mallet did not care to be troubled with his provincial correspondent. Notwithstanding this impertinence, as Hume justly calls it, he persisted in urging Millar to persevere, and Mallet was finally induced by the publisher to mark a few intrusive Scotticisms.

In 1757 came out his "Natural History of Religion," a work well fitted to awaken anew the hostility of the

religious world. Hume complains that it attracted but little notice. A single pamphlet written against it by Dr. Hurd, in the violent manner of his friend Warburton, consoled the author for his little success. The work was dedicated to John Home, the author of "Douglas," in affectionate and graceful terms. This dedication he wrote to Millar to suppress, lest it might prove injurious to Home, who was then engaged in his contest with the assembly of the kirk. When Home resigned his office of minister, Hume renewed the dedication.

The "Essay on Suicide" was also written about this time. It was intended for publication, but was finally suppressed. Casting aside all ancient creeds, Hume seems to have thought it his duty to test, by the power of reason, every question of morals. He approached with confidence the terrible one of suicide: and he convinces himself by an argument repulsive to the pure reason of every reader, that his own life is lawfully placed in his own power.

With this essay was connected one on the "Immortality of the Soul." This argument, too, revolts the higher instincts of our nature. Hume asserts that the spirit declines with the fading body. He urges that the mind, so far from being destined for another stage of existence, is only suited to the wants of the present. And he points to annihilation as the natural termination of all those restless longings for a higher being, which pursue men from infancy till death.

Remembering their ill-treatment, he now sent to the faculty of advocates a brief, cold note of resignation of his office of librarian. It was received in silence. The advocates had never been sensible of the honor he had done them in consenting to arrange their collections: they had censured him as no other librarian had ever been censured; and he was glad to part from them with cold contempt.

Meanwhile he amused himself with patronizing Wilkie, the author of the "Epigoniad." There was much in Wilkie's early history to excite interest. He had pursued knowledge under singular disadvantages, and had shown a capacity which gave promise of the greatest achievements. He was a farmer's son, born in the neighborhood of Edinburgh. The farmer's fields were much infested with pigeons, and Wilkie was sent out as a scarecrow ("an office," says Hume, "for which he was well qualified") in the midst of a field of wheat. In this situation he first conceived the design of his epic poem, and even executed a part of it. He carried out with him his Homer, together with a table and pen and ink, and a great, rusty gun. He composed and wrote two or three lines till a flock of pigeons settled on the field; then ran to fire at them, returned again to write verses, and was soon again interrupted.

Hume relates an amusing trick which was played upon an English physician, by the aid of Wilkie. Russel, a Scot, carried the traveller one day to the poet's farm. He saw the bard at a little distance, sowing his

corn, with a sheet about him, all covered with dirt and sweat, with a dress and appearance suitable to his occupation. Said Russel, "Here is a fellow, a peasant, with whom I have some business, let us call him." Wilkie came at a sign, and after some conversation upon his farm, the Greek poets were spoken of. The traveller, who could hardly understand the broad Scotch of the peasant, was now surprised to hear him readily quoting Greek. "Is it usual," he said, on returning, "for your peasants to speak Greek?" "Oh, yes," said Russel; "what better can they do in the long winter evenings than read the Greek poets." The physician went back to England with a high idea of Scottish learning.

Wilkie had been appointed minister of Ratho at £80 a year, and thought himself rich. He was not only a classical scholar, but a fine mathematician, and yet could never learn to spell.

Hume professed himself delighted with the *Epigoniad*. He pronounced it a wonderful production, full of genius and sublimity, with a versification noble, harmonious, forcible, and correct. He wrote a long review of it for the *London Critical Review*, proclaiming the advent of a great epic poet, who had inherited all the genius and purity of Greece. His countrymen yielded to his enthusiasm, and for a time Wilkie was looked upon as the Scottish Homer.

Few now care to read the sounding and empty production which startled the Edinburgh critics into violent

enthusiasm. A single simple lay of Burns more stirs the hearts of Scotchmen than all the labored periods of the *Epigoniad*. Wilkie was as indifferent a poet as was Hume a critic of poetry. The philosopher's cold and sluggish intellect, feeling after truth in the abstract paths of philosophy, and seeking to strip life of its ideal forms, rather than to create and replenish them, had no sympathy with that species of genius which revels in pages of Shakspeare, and sits more constrained in the labored excellence of Milton. He mistook the sound of the *Epigoniad* for poetry. A heavy classic tale, told in the noisy harmony of Pope, seemed to him a poem destined for all ages, and the finest effort of Scottish genius. Nor did he ever awake from his delusion, but continued to the last to place Wilkie next to Homer, and far above the savage and uncultivated Milton.

But an author more worthy of his ready commendation was now preparing a great work for the press. Robertson had just finished his *History of Scotland*, and had submitted the manuscript to the criticism of his friend. Of this work Hume was a more capable judge, and no one will dissent from the praises he bestowed upon its style and accuracy. Wholly free from all literary jealousy, he was delighted with this new accession to the ranks of Scottish authors.

Cheered by this sudden fertility of the native intellect, he exclaims to Gilbert Elliot, in grateful surprise, "Is it not strange that at a time when we have lost our princes, our parliaments, our independent government—

even the presence of our chief nobility ; are unhappy in our pronunciation ; speak a very corrupt dialect of the tongue we make use of—is it not strange, I say, that in these circumstances we should really be the people the most distinguished for literature in Europe !” In all this mental progress, Hume could not have remained unconscious that he had himself taken a leading part, and as he surveyed the growing strength of the native literature, he must have felt the joy of a master and a creator.

Yet Edinburgh had long been distasteful to him. With the exception of his sister, no tie of relationship bound him there. He was a philosophic bachelor, and the world seemed to afford him no fixed abode. In 1757 he wrote to Dr. Clephane that he was composing the history of the Tudors, and was preparing to remove to London, probably for life. “A room,” he says, “in a sober, decent family, who would not be averse to admit a sober, discreet, virtuous, frugal, regular, quiet, good-natured man of bad character—such a room, I say, would suit me, especially if I could take my meals in the family, and more especially still if it was not far distant from Dr. Clephane’s. I shall then be able, dear doctor, to spend £250 a year, which is the sum upon which you formerly undertook me.”

Meanwhile he was still zealous, on all occasions, in advancing the fame and interests of Scottish authors. Every letter that he wrote was filled with praises of the “*Epigoniad*” and the “*Douglas*.” His correspondence

with eminent men was extensive, and he had the satisfaction of finding that his favorite poets were widely read. Home had succeeded in England beyond expectation. His tragedy was everywhere admired, and he had obtained a pension from the Prince of Wales. Wilkie was less fortunate. The English united in condemning his epic as tame and tasteless. Hume never ceased to lament its fate and to condemn the critics. He wrote to Millar, the publisher, to use more exertion to give it circulation. "Nothing surprises me more," he says, "than the ill-usage which the *Epigoniad* has received." In Edinburgh, it seems, he had contrived to get off a whole edition, but in London the book would not sell. Hume also wrote a kind letter to Millar, urging him to give Robertson a higher price for his history than the Edinburgh booksellers could afford. "Some part of his subject," he added, "is common with mine; but as his work is a History of Scotland, mine of England, we do not interfere; and it will rather be an amusement to the reader to compare our method of treating the same subject. I give you thanks, however, for your attention in asking my opinion."

A rival, meanwhile, had suddenly started up in history and gained almost without an effort that wide reputation for which Hume had hitherto labored in vain. Tobias Smollet, a Scot, a man of original genius in his peculiar field of novel writing, but known rather as a literary hack than as an author of eminent ability, published, in 1757, a history of England, from the Revolution.

Smollett's "Roderick Random" and "Humphrey Clinker" will live as long as coarse wit and eccentric character can find admirers. One or two of his poems, also, immortalized by a spark of true poetry, must continue to be read. But his history was wholly without a pretence to excellence. It was written in the coarse style of Roderick Random, with none of that keen perception of character, or that broad and forcible humor, which gave to Smollett's novels their lasting worth. Its politics were those of a practised party writer, eager to blacken his opponents by indiscriminate abuse. In all wide views of policy and all deep speculation into the causes of political error, it was wholly deficient. Few gleams of literary appreciation lighten its heavy monotony. To true taste in literature and art, Smollett was a stranger. He had passed through Italy, complaining of the badness of the inns and the innumerable discomforts that everywhere assailed the traveller in its filthy cities, and the yet more repulsive homes of its ignorant peasantry. But he had never raised his eyes above the low level of every-day discomforts to discern the charms of its scenery, or the loveliness of its works of art. And with a like spirit, he had gone through English history, fixing his attention chiefly on the low and the mean, and blind to its elevations.

His work, too, had been written with a haste and inaccuracy that show his total indifference to the high claims of history. He had aimed rather to please his bookseller than posterity; to get through a work of

considerable length in as short a time as possible. Almost every deficiency that could be found in a book of that nature, his volumes displayed. No one ever thought of consulting Smollett's history as an authority for any uncommon fact; and even those that were notorious he made no scruple to bend to his Jacobite theory. The only merit he could claim was zeal, and a rude ardor of prejudice which supplied to common readers the want of the artistic warmth of the true man of letters.

Strange to say, this book was everywhere eagerly read. The publishers could hardly meet the demand. Smollett's fame, such as it was, was made. He was the popular historian of the hour. And while Hume's second volume had been received with faint applause and a limited circulation, Smollett rose at once to wide renown, and made by his sales what to the more prudent philosopher would have been an ample fortune.

. Another historical work, Robertson's Scotland, appeared in 1758. It was designed by the prudent author to please all political and religious parties as well as all readers of pure taste. In all respects it was the opposite of Smollett's. Its style had been so carefully wrought and polished that no critic could detect a blemish. Its language had been purified and modelled after the best manner of Swift; its periods were sounding and melodious; its paintings of character and of historical scenes, clear and labored, wanted only philosophy and depth to render them equal to those of his master, Hume.

Philosophical disquisitions Robertson had not avoided. He rather erred by indulging too much in reflections and speculations. But he had been careful always to bend his genius to the popular prejudice, and however widely his premises might seem to lead him from that direction, he never failed to return to it at the close. He shrank from skepticism in religion and new doctrine in politics. His vision, bounded by the limits of legitimacy, never wandered away into unknown depths, or sounded the realm of mystery that encircles all human knowledge.

Robertson wrote feelingly and with pathos. Too much of a classic to indulge in that wild romance to which the history of his country invited him, he yet endeavored to select engaging scenes and characters, and to present them to his readers arrayed in the richest colors of fancy. He had more of the poetical in his nature than Hume, but his love of the ideal was chastened by the influence of the same models which had formed the intellect of his friend. His researches, though not deep, had been careful. He was an honest if not a learned historian. His love for literature was sincere, and he wrote always as if under the eye of posterity.

The History of Scotland gained immediate success. Hume, towards the end of 1758, had gone to London to overlook the publication of a new volume of his own work. He wrote to Robertson, with sincere pleasure, an account of his triumph. Every one he met with

praised the History of Scotland. Mallet boasted that no Englishman was capable of composing such a work. The town was surprised at the purity of its language, and insisted that the author, who had never been across the Tweed, must have been educated at Oxford. No untravelled Scotchman, the English asserted, could have produced such pure English. Prince Edward read it with delight, the whole royal family were its warmest admirers. Lord Mansfield said he was at a loss which to esteem most, the matter or the style, and to these agreeable particulars Hume irreverently adds. "Lord Lyttleton seems to think that since the time of St. Paul there has scarce been a better writer than Dr. Robertson.

Such were the rivals who suddenly eclipsed Hume in the esteem of his age, and had apparently usurped that position in historical writing which he had aspired to fill. A faint repining dropped from the philosopher when he saw the ovation of Tobias Smollett. In May, 1758, he thus writes to Elliot. "I am now come within sight of land, and am drawing near to the period of that volume which I had undertaken. I find the subject curious, and I believe that this volume will contain some novelty, as well as greater accuracy of composition, than is employed by our ordinary historians. I could add greater than is requisite to please the taste of the public, at least if we may judge by the vast success of Dr. Smollett's history. '*Vanitas vanitatum atque omnia vanitas*,' says the preacher, the great object of us authors, and

of you orators and statesmen, is to gain applause, and you see at what rate it is to be purchased. I fancy there is a future state to give to poets, historians, and philosophers, their just reward." Very soon, however, he began to make Smollett's fame a subject of genial pleasantry. "Here I sat," he writes to Robertson, "near the historical summit of Parnassus, immediately under Dr. Smollett, and you have the impudence to squeeze yourself by me and place yourself directly under his feet." He could hardly view, except with a pleasant smile, the huge and rustic figure which had been elevated by a strange chance to the summit of historical fame, and doubtless Smollett himself was ill at ease in his lofty pinnacle, knowing how little of labor and study he had given to his bookseller's compilation, and fearing the ridicule of men of sense in his own and all coming ages for having, although innocently, been raised so far above his proper place.

Robertson's rapid popularity might better have caused Hume to repine. It was his own disciple that had suddenly outstripped and dethroned his master. But for Hume's example Robertson might never have written, or had he written, would have wanted many a grace and ornament. He had profited, too, by rivalry with his friend. The common hatred against Hume had kept him from rising as he otherwise would have done, but until Robertson appeared, he was without dispute the chief historian of his time. No man of letters could venture to prefer the Henry II. of Lyttleton, or the rough

writing of Smollett, to the pure and tasteful work which had sprung from the well-trained genius of Hume. But now the London critics had a safer ground of attack, a rival had arisen who might well aspire to compete with him; they hoped by praising Robertson to depreciate Hume, and in this they were not disappointed. Robertson was everywhere preferred to his rival, the skeptic sank before the Christian, the philosophic thinker before the graceful scene painter.

Far different, and very mortifying to the elder writer, had been the fate of the two histories. Hume's first volume had been met by the English public with a storm of reproach. No epithet of reprobation had been too harsh for the skeptical author, not a voice had been raised in his defence. The good company of the capital had been wholly against him. The literary lords who distributed fame, and the second-rate authors who received it as their gift, had joined in a general clamor against his impiety, and in an abhorrence of his politics. But for Robertson no such ordeal was prepared. He was met by universal approbation; no whisper of dissent disturbed the general harmony of applause; royalty, and nobility, authors, statesmen, and eminent lawyers sounded his praise. The pious Lyttleton and the deist Mallet, Mansfield the friend of Pope, and Chesterfield the gentlemanly scholar, became immediately his warm friends. It had been objected to Hume that he could not write English. But no trace of Scotticisms could be found in the History of Scotland. "Had the author lived all his

life in London, and in the best company, he could not have expressed himself with greater elegance and purity," cried the delighted Grenville.

Here was much to disturb Hume's self-complacency. He might well have repined and grown disheartened to see the position in letters for which he had devoted his life given up so easily to one who had made literature only a pleasant recreation. A few pangs of regret and a slight expression of complaint would have been readily pardoned to the fallen champion of the Olympic race. But no unpleasant emotion broke his serenity. Philosophy and good-nature preserved him from envy, and friendship led him to rejoice at the good fortune of his rival "Had you and I," he wrote to Robertson, "been such fools as to have given way to jealousy and malignity against each other, and to have rent all our acquaintance into parties, what a noble amusement we should have exhibited to the blockheads, which they are now likely to be disappointed of. All the people whose friendship or judgment either of us value, are friends to us both, and will be pleased with the success of both, as we will be with that of each other. I declare to you I have not of a long time had a more sensible pleasure than the good reception of your history has given me within this fortnight." Another conviction, too, consoled Hume—the consciousness of the world's mistake. He at least, if no one else, saw clearly the final fate of the contest. Awhile his competitor might outstrip him, and in the first burst of his triumph, an injudicious

public might fix the laurel on his brow. But there was yet a long course to be run, in which real strength, not popular prejudice, was to decide the race. So Hume retired contentedly to his studies, smiling at the vain malice of his enemies, and looking confidently forward to the moment of their complete discomfiture.

Wonderful changes had meanwhile taken place in his native land. A few years before, not a man of literary eminence had been known in Scotland ; and now Scottish genius was in its splendid dawn. The London press teemed with the works of Scotland's authors. Besides Wilkie, Home, Robertson, and Hume, Adam Smith was just printing his "Theory of Moral Sentiments;" Kames, his "Law Tracts;" and Gerard, an "Essay on Taste." These books were widely read, and there could no longer have lingered a prejudice in London against Scottish authors, since they had invaded and captivated the public taste. A hearty growl of the old contempt might escape from Johnson, but he was in a poor minority. Edinburgh shone like a new Athens in the fame of her gifted sons.

Generous Hume looked upon all these busy intellects as in a measure his own offspring. At least they were persons with whom he had lived in close friendship and familiarity. In the kindness of his nature he rejoiced with them in their popularity, and urged on their success. Adam Smith was his most intimate associate. Many of the refined theories which mark Smith's successive works were suggested, enlarged, and perfected by

the conversation of his friend. When the "Theory" came out, Hume took every means to make it widely known. He sent a copy to the Duke of Argyle, to Lord Lyttleton, Horace Walpole, and Soame Jenyns, and to Burke, the master genius of his country—but known to Hume only as an Irish gentleman, who had lately written "a very pretty Treatise on the Sublime." He wrote a delightful amusing letter to Smith, announcing its perfect triumph. He told him that the mob of literati were loud in its praise; that three bishops had called at Millar's to order copies; that the Bishop of Peterborough had heard it extolled above all books in the world; and that Charles Townsend, "the cleverest fellow in England," had said he would put his ward, the Duke of Buccleugh, under the author's care. When Hume heard of this promise, he lost no time to do an act of friendship. He called on Charles Townsend, and urged him to send the young duke to Glasgow, where Smith was professor. But it was afterwards arranged that Smith should travel abroad with his pupil, and should be recompensed by a large salary for having given up his professorship.

Good books, as these were, which now invaded English literature from Scotland, and, by a sudden foray, drove the native writers back in dismay, it is curious to notice the cunning trick by which the Scots defeated the common foe. The art of mutual praise was never better practised by any literary circle. The Scots, conscious of being in an enemy's country, kept manfully

together. Their tactics were admirable. Hume, the great leader, upon whom the dint of the battle had fallen, wounded, and with broken armor, still cheered and encouraged his followers. He lauded Home, until his plays were the chief stock of the London theatres. Wilkie, indifferent subject as he was, he had puffed, lamented over, and courageously defended in the last extremity, until Lord Chesterfield himself, the best critic, at least, of the House of Lords, proclaimed him a great poet. He kindly supported Robertson at a time when he bade fair to carry off his own laurels. Against the melancholy, hasty Smelfungus Smollett he never breathed aught of harshness: he would do nothing to pull him down from his pedestal, but left him to fall of his own accord. Smith he had put forward as the Diomede of his forces, daring him against the fiercest critic. While for Gerard, Ferguson, Kames, and Blair, he had ever words of encouragement. The followers imitated their leader. Scot praised Scot, and defended, exalted, and deified each other. Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough, helped Hume to scatter copies of Smith's "Theory" among his legal friends. Mallet, renegade as he was, had still enough of natural feeling to aid his countrymen. The Scots were as successful as they deserved; and with the exception of the Achilles of the party, found as much fame, plunder and popularity as they could have desired.

Hume's residence in London does not seem to have given him pleasant recollections of the capital or of its

people. He disliked the English no less upon nearer acquaintance; and for this he had good reason. They had opposed and decried him, when a young author, he issued his works from their press: and when he came to live among them they paid him little or no attention. During his twelve months' stay in the capital, he apparently made few acquaintances, and mentions only one "Mr. Burke or Bourke." He wrote warningly to Helvetius, that London was without a literary society; that the taste for literature had wholly decayed among its inhabitants, and that only politicians and rich men were of any consequence among the barbarians upon the banks of the Thames.

He returned to Edinburgh in November, 1759, leaving behind him his "History of the Tudors," ready for publication. In writing this volume he had relapsed into the fault that had chiefly given rise to the unpopularity of the History of the Stuarts. Hume had strong tory or Jacobite leanings. For the persons of the Stuarts he entertained a plain affection. And he now sought to excuse their arbitrary policy by proving that the Tudors had transmitted to them a power almost despotic. If this were true, it would follow that the Parliaments of 1640 and 1688 were wrong, according to legal reasoning, in opposing the tyranny of their kings. This argument he pursues with ardor, and it serves to lend an interest and continuity to his work, even to those who, unlike his contemporaries, have no share in the consequences to which such reasoning might lead. But to

the English of that day the question still had a living interest. If Hume were right, the pretender, who, not fifteen years before, had invaded England, and startled its quiet people with the terrors of a civil war, was justified in his undertaking. He was only claiming a throne of which he had been wrongfully deprived. All the whigs, therefore, the reigning family and its dependents, and even many Tories, would necessarily abhor Hume's political principles. In the violence which faction then assumed, he was certain to meet with unsparing severity. And the "History of the House of Tudors" came into the world amid general abuse from all parties. It was too remarkable a work to be wholly neglected, even at first, but it was noticed only to be condemned. "But I am now grown callous to the impressions of public folly," says the author; and he sat himself down quietly to compose the earlier portion of his history, which, although the least valuable, was to be his final work.

About this time Robertson consulted him as to the choice of a new subject for historical composition, mentioning to him his having thought of Charles V. To Hume the days of Charles had little interest. The king he thought a very inferior character, and he had always advocated and practised his advice of choosing an interesting hero. His calm philosophy was hardly stirred by the memory of that great Reformation which had shaken the world under Charles, and of those discoveries which his subjects so successfully prosecuted in America.

He proposed, therefore, to Robertson, as a more entertaining subject, the History of Greece; one large quarto, he thought, would contain the whole period until the death of Philip; and it is amusing to imagine the astonishment with which he would have viewed the immense and valuable labors of a Grote or a Thirlwall upon a theme which he believed might be so briefly treated. If this subject did not please him, he recommended a series of biographies, after the manner of Plutarch. These he would have short, amusing, and full of anecdote. "You see," he says, "that in Plutarch the life of Cæsar may be read in half an hour: were you to write the life of Henry the Fourth of France, you might pillage all the pretty stories in Sully, and speak more of his pretty mistresses than of his battles. In short, you might gather all the flowers of modern history in this manner,—the remarkable popes, the kings of Sweden, the great discoverers and conquerors of the New World; even the eminent men of letters might furnish you with matter." This suggestion shows that Hume had formed a just opinion of Robertson's genius: his pleasant style, agreeable narrative powers, fancy, feeling, and superficial reflection, would have made him the most entertaining of biographers; while as an historian he has long since sunk from the first rank. His writings, in fact, approach more nearly extensive biographies than the ideal of a perfect history.

That singular forgery, the poems of Ossian, appeared in 1760. Few poems have gained wider celebrity or

have retained it longer. Its wild imagery, its novel verse and form, its strength and passion, have captivated all young minds, and amused and excited the imagination of many gifted intellects. Byron, in his youth, attempted to imitate it in vain; Napoleon fed his young spirit upon its wild and startling melodies; and studious minds in every part of the world have been touched and influenced by the daring forgery. Everywhere Ossian has been admired, and there can hardly be a doubt that its author, whoever he was, was a poet.

Macpherson, when he first published his collection of Gaelic songs, found a ready friend in Hume, who rejoiced to find that a poem so full of strength and noble feeling had been composed in Scotland, at a moment when the barbarous Britons were yet ignorant and enslaved. Hume knew nothing of the Gaelic and was easily deceived with the rest of the Edinburgh literati. The antiquities of Scotland had for him no charm; he had left that study to others. Blair, more enthusiastic than his friend, when the genuineness of the new poems was disputed, wrote an essay in its defence. But both Hume and Blair finally became convinced that Ossian, whatever its merit, had been written by Macpherson himself, and Hume wrote a contemptuous essay to prove the imposture, which, out of regard to Blair, he never printed.

Slowly as Hume's fame had risen in London, it was already omnipotent at Paris. He heard that he was there spoken of in language which he was ashamed to

repeat, and he tells Robertson that though he might unseat him from the historical throne in London, he could hardly hope to do so in Paris. Between the morals of the two capitals there was but little choice. But, while in the capital of England infidelity concealed itself under a decent conformity, at Paris the language of good society was wholly skeptical. The keen sarcasm of Voltaire had destroyed the church, and the eloquence of Rousseau had substituted feeling for faith. Moral excellence was unknown. Princes' mistresses ruled society and gave tone to the fashionable world. Intellectually, the standard of fashion was high. In the best circles, Diderot, D'Alembert, Raynal, Marmontel, and their associates, were received with more warmth than counts and marquises. The gifted and high-born females, whose favors were most courted, were persons well-read, thoughtful and ingenious; they read with eagerness the best productions in philosophy and morals, and their conversation was so marked by thought and feeling, that to the trivial Walpole it seemed insupportably dull.

One of those ladies who ruled in Parisian society had read, understood, and been charmed by the writings of Hume. Madame de Boufflers, besides having a living husband, a count, was also mistress to the Prince de Conti. This arrangement only added to her influence in the world of fashion and letters. The most virtuous did not hesitate to struggle for her attentions. She was, apparently, considered a person of elevated character, and never seems to have suspected that any one could

be of a different opinion. The prince's family received her with such marked regard that she even attended the death-bed of his mother, her early patroness, with the assiduity and tenderness of a daughter. When she paid a visit to England, the British aristocracy united to do her honor. The Marchioness of Hertford, one of the purest women of the day, thought it no disgrace to call upon the Prince of Conti's mistress; and even Johnson had been captivated by her engaging manners and conversation.

From this lady Hume received a letter inviting him to Paris, asking him to become her correspondent, and expressing her admiration of his works. "For a long time, sir," she wrote, "I have struggled with conflicting sentiments. The admiration which your sublime work (the History) has awakened in me, and the esteem with which it has inspired me for your person, your talents, and your virtue, have often aroused the desire of writing to you, that I might express those sentiments towards you with which I am so deeply penetrated." She had read, she added, almost all good books, and none had united, in her opinion, so many excellences as that of Hume. It moved and transported her; it filled the heart with sentiments of humanity and benevolence; it elevated the soul. "I dare only add," she continued, "that in all which issues from your pen, you show yourself a perfect philosopher, a statesman, a historian full of genius, an enlightened politician, and a genuine patriot." Poor Hume, with the abuse of London yet

ringing in his ears, excluded from Christian society by the prejudice against his skepticism, and denounced as a traitor for his defence of Charles, must have drunk in the praises of the impulsive French woman with the rapture of a thirsty Bedouin. It was the draught for which his soul was famishing. Filled with a high sense of the grandeur of literary fame, he wanted to be openly admired and adored. As yet he had received only the cold praise of the Scottish public and the warmer but guarded commendation of his chosen friends. But the voice from Paris sounded sweeter to his ears from long delay. Thirty years of disappointment had not damped his passion for literary fame.

Hyppolite de Saujon, Comtesse de Boufflers, became his frequent correspondent, and proved herself an admirable friend. She confided to him without scruple her own sorrows, hopes, disappointments and cares. In return he gave her advice which must sometimes have been distasteful, but which, because it was honest and well meant, she did not resent. When her husband, the Count de Boufflers, died, she communicated to Hume her hope of becoming the wife of the prince, and when she was disappointed, he consoled her by a letter of wise counsel. Upon his talking of coming over to Paris, she offered to provide him with an apartment, and to introduce him into the elevated circle of her friends. When Rousseau proposed to fly for refuge to England, the generous countess gave him a warm letter to her benevolent philosopher. On Hume's visit to

Paris he found her as devoted and impassioned as her letters had indicated ; she introduced him at once to the Duke of Orleans, and soon after to the whole royal family. Afterwards she aided in securing him the appointment of secretary, by writing a pressing request in his favor to her friend, the Duke of Bedford ; and almost the last act of Hume's life was a touching letter to the countess, in which he bids her an eternal adieu.

Touched by the admiration and friendship of this noble lady, even Hume was moved from his usual calmness. His letters to her sometimes gallantly affect a passion which might possibly have been sincere. He is as warm and tender as his stiff habit of writing will allow, and, although little accustomed to write passion, seems to have labored to return that of the countess. Hers, probably, was no more than a sincere admiration for his genius and philosophy. He supplied her with arguments by which she could silence any lingering doubts as to the truth of the common faith ; his purity of morals and unbounded good-nature won her esteem ; and she worshipped him impetuously, as a devotee her saint. But Hume may have viewed the matter in a more practical light. Of love he was little susceptible, but he may have looked upon the countess, after the death of her husband, as a desirable connection for himself. By marriage with her, he would have insured himself a powerful circle of friends, should he remain in England, and a position in French society, which many nobles might well envy. With some such unexpressed

aspiration, therefore, he urged the lady, upon the death of her husband, to abandon her ambitious hopes as likely to be disappointed, to withdraw herself gradually from the Prince of Conti, to content herself with a more private position, and finally he expresses a wish that they might fly together to some retreat in Italy, where he might attend her through a delightful pilgrimage. This idea constantly haunts his letters to the countess. He returns again and again to the project of wandering away with his friend to some Italian or Grecian solitude, where they might linger out together a philosophic old age.

At all events, the countess is the only lady to whom Hume is known to have written in the language of love. His earlier poems may not be authentic, but of his correspondence with the brilliant French woman there can be no doubt. Her amiable attentions won his heart and her memory faded from his mind only with death.

Settled at Edinburgh and still far from rich, Hume could hardly accept the invitation of the countess to visit Paris. He was too prudent to incur the expense, and fearful, perhaps, of any change in his mode of life. At fifty, he said, men grow suspicious of change. He wrote a polite answer expressing a hope, when the war ceased and his affairs permitted, of making a journey to Paris. He recommends to Madame Boufflers, at the same time, Dr. Robertson's history as a work of unusual value. Soon after, he received a letter from her requesting his patronage for Rousseau, who, however, did not

then visit England; and one to the same purpose from an exiled Jacobite, the Earl Marischal, Governor of Neufchatel, under Frederick, who had also taken the eccentric Genevese under his protection.

The success of Hume's skeptical writings had called out many partial replies in reviews and pamphlets, but as yet no writer of talent, except Kames, had labored to refute him. He had reigned hitherto the master of the field of argument. His essay on miracles, shaking the foundations of revelation, now met with an effective reply. Dr. Campbell, a Scottish clergyman, principal of Marischal College, had preached a sermon upon that subject, which was afterwards expanded into a dissertation. The work, before publication, was submitted to Hume by Dr. Blair. In a letter to the latter, Hume complains that Dr. Campbell had applied to him the terms "infidel writer," and also, that he should have addressed his book to him personally, instead of writing it upon general principles. Yet he afterwards wrote to his assailant, complimenting him on his talent and obliging manners. Dr. Campbell politely softened the unpalatable expressions, and imitated Hume in his endeavors to preserve perfect good feeling in private. He even expresses his admiration of his opponent's genius, and of the goodness and candor that appear in every part of his letter. It was Hume's fixed resolution never to reply to an antagonist, and he suffered Dr. Campbell's book, therefore, to remain master of the field.

In 1762 appeared two quarto volumes, containing the earlier portion of the History of England. But he had now grown weary of the work, and wanted that ardor which had warmed his earlier studies. It had now become a task at which he labored with little other hope than that of gain. The subject of the earlier volumes was not one in which he could feel any interest. For antiquarian research he had no taste, and for barbarous races, such as were the early English, he could feel only contempt. The wars of the Anglo-Saxons had seemed to Milton no better than the contests of kites and crows; to Hume they were wearisome and disheartening. He drew a few happy characters, of which Alfred's was the finest, and collected some scattered facts with regard to the manners of the Norman and Saxon times. But he was conscious that the subject was one that he was ill qualified to treat. In his letters to his publisher, he complains incessantly of the labor he was expending, as if weary of task work. These volumes cost him more labor than any other part of his History, and they have proved the least attractive to his readers. His clear style and his tasteful arrangement he still retains; but even these could not hide his gross deficiencies.

His work was now ended. He was to write no more history. Of this, however, he was not conscious. He still assured Millar that he hoped to complete two more volumes, and even made some preparations and collections for that design. But he had already written

enough. His work flowing so readily from his practised pen, was already become a possession of posterity. Its acute political speculations were arresting the attention of the best minds of the time. Its thoughtful, simple style had already caught the ear of the public. When Smollett's noisy fame was over, and even that of Robertson himself had sensibly declined, the production of the mightier intellect gained a steady and lasting reputation.

By the sale of his copyrights his fortune had been considerably improved. He now moved from his former lodgings to a house or flat in James Court. These rooms were afterwards occupied by James Boswell, and here Johnson, on his visit to Edinburgh, was lodged in the apartments where had lived the man he detested.

Hume's house Mr. Burton describes as being part of a building sixteen or seventeen stories high, built, as is common at Edinburgh, against the side of a hill. James Court was on the summit of the hill, and you descended from it, by successive flights of steps, into a busy thoroughfare below. The court was entered by a low gateway, and was surrounded by tall buildings. Hume lived the third floor above the street, and from his window could overlook a lake, and the whole space now occupied by the new town, which was then covered by woodland, gardens, ponds, and barren heath. It was the rapid growth of this new town to splendor and comfort that a few years later awakened his national pride, and led him to extol it as the finest city in Europe.

A short time after his removal, he writes to Adam

Smith that he had set up a chaise. Evidently he was beginning to taste that ease and comfort which he had so well deserved. From youth he had contrived to blend frugality with charity; a narrow income with perfect independence. It is pleasant to think that the decline of his life was free from those distresses which tormented many of his literary contemporaries. Smollett died poor and hopeless. Goldsmith by dying escaped a gaol. Even Johnson, the most popular of the English writers, left little behind him; and, until he received a pension, was never out of danger of the Fleet. While Hume, with no other resource than his bookseller, by the practice of rigid economy, had gained a comfortable support. It was the want of that true Scottish virtue which Hume had learned from his good mother at Ninewells, that led Smollett, Johnson and Goldsmith to waste their large earnings, and die in penury.

Thomas Reid, a name renowned in pure metaphysics, published in 1764 his "Enquiry into the Human Mind." He was a year younger than Hume, but had avoided that fault which the former lamented to his dying day—a premature publication. He reserved his valuable speculations until his fifty-third year, before going to press. And he then produced that clear and subtle refutation of Hume's youthful theories, which has made him famous. Reid was Hume's genuine literary offspring; and he himself asserts that his attention was turned to philosophical reasoning, by an acquaintance with Hume's writings.

Before printing, Reid, through Blair, desired that

Hume would look over the manuscript. The philosopher, however, seems to have felt no curiosity to read the metaphysical reasonings of the amiable clergyman, having evidently little hope of their being of any value. He even grew angry. "I wish," said he, "that the parsons would confine themselves to their old occupation of worrying one another, and leave philosophers to argue with temper, moderation, and good manners." But upon examining portions of the work he grew interested, and wrote to Reid, commending its philosophical spirit, and praising the excellent English of the style. Reid, in his reply, indicates the friendly terms upon which Hume lived with his opponents. "Your friendly adversaries, Drs. Campbell and Gerrard, as well as Dr. Gregory, return their compliments to you respectfully. A little philosophical society here, of which all three are members, is much indebted to you for entertainment. Your company would, although we are all good Christians, be more acceptable than that of St. Athanasius." This was different treatment from what any divine of England would have ventured to offer to Hume, and he might well class the English with barbarians, if the brutal manners of Warburton, Hurd and Johnson were to be considered as a test.

England, however, was finally to mete out due honor to the philosopher. By a strange chance, his character and writings had won for him the regard of the Marquis of Hertford, an English nobleman of great political influence. The marquis was known to be strict in his

religious views, almost to austerity; and was a man of the purest morals. Why he should have selected a skeptic and a philosopher to become his daily companion is hardly to be imagined; at all events he sent a request to Hume to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a promise of securing him the appointment of secretary. Hume, at first, on account of his age, and an unwillingness to be thrown on the society of his superiors in rank, declined the offer; but when it was pressed upon him, he yielded. The office must have had for him many attractions. He had long wished to visit Paris, and he now had an opportunity of doing so under the most agreeable auspices. He had the promise of a pension for life; while, should he obtain the secretaryship, it would give him at once a large income, and open the way to more important appointments. The patronage of Lord Hertford was itself of singular advantage to him, since it removed for ever the cloud that had hitherto hung over his reputation. No one now could shrink from him on account of his skeptical renown, when a nobleman so famous for decorum and piety as the Marquis of Hertford, had selected him as his secretary.

Allured by all these motives, Hume hastened to London and became acquainted with Lord Hertford. He was charmed with his kindness, and his unaffected piety, and was equally pleased with his lady: While the effect of their friendship upon him he describes as almost equal to "regeneration." Doors which had once been

barred against the skeptical philosopher, were opened to the rising politician. He was introduced to Lord Bute, the reigning favorite, and dined with Lord Chesterfield, the dispenser of fame. Yet he writes to Adam Smith despondingly, as if he had made a wrong decision. "I repine," he says, "at my loss of ease and leisure and retirement, and independence; and it is not without a sigh that I look backwards, nor without reluctance that I cast my eyes forwards."

Robertson had lately been appointed historiographer to the king, with a salary of two hundred pounds, an office to which Hume might better have aspired. "Honest David Home (Hume)," wrote Dr. Carlyle, with the heart of all others that rejoices most at the prosperity of his friends, was certainly a little hurt with this last honor conferred on Robertson. A lucky incident has given him relief. The Earl of Hertford is appointed ambassador to France; not very capable himself, they have loaded him with an insignificant secretary, one Charles Bunbury, who for the sake of pleasure, more than the thousand a year, solicited for the office. Hertford knew David, and some good genius prompted him to ask him to go along and manage his business. It is an honorable character, he will see his friends in France. If he tires he can return when he pleases. Bunbury will probably tire first, and then David will become secretary."

Hume had before him the promise of a brilliant reception at Paris. His friends there had already written to him that his reputation exceeded what had been known

of any other writer. His clear yet profound speculations had a wonderful charm for the French public. His classic and graceful history had completed his success. As a writer he was of the French rather than of the English school. In style and manner he was as pure and classical as Voltaire. Skeptical on all subjects, he startled and excited the minds of Frenchmen by the daring nature of his reasoning upon political and moral topics. He was more bold and candid than Rousseau or Voltaire, and possessed a philosophic power to which they could make no pretence. Before he arrived in Paris, therefore, his philosophy had made many converts, and his coming was awaited by a crowd of male and female disciples, who were prepared to receive him with an ovation worthy of the high-priest of skepticism.

A consciousness of this appreciation in that capital had long cheered him during his disappointments at home. Paris still held that eminence in letters and fashion which it had gained in the time of the magnificent Louis. To be well received in its society was the crowning triumph of the English gentleman. Here Chesterfield had come to learn ease and good breeding. Here the young English noblemen hastened, hoping to gain admission into that exclusive circle in which princes, wits, and *bas bleu* mingled at ease. This privilege, however, was very sparingly dealt out. The French ladies, with some show of contempt, now and then admitted a young duke or an eminent peer to a formal visit or two within the favored circle. But this was all. Smarting under the success of English arms,

they still contrived to keep English society in humble submission to their caprices. London was still only a provincial city, incapable of awarding fame or of directing fashion, and the eminent men and women of Paris were prepared to hear with delight those sarcasms which Hume was in the habit of pouring upon the commercial barbarism of the inhabitants of the British capital.

High as had been Hume's expectations of a triumph, they were more than fulfilled. Hardly had he entered Paris, when Lord Beauchamp came to tell him that he must go instantly with him to the Duchess de la Vallière. Hume would have excused himself on account of his dress; but Beauchamp told him he had orders to bring him though he were in boots. The philosopher, therefore, went with him in his travelling dress, to visit the impetuous fine lady. She made him speeches and compliments without bounds. A fat gentleman sat near her, who, when she had grown weary, continued the strain of compliment. Hume observed that he wore a star of the richest diamonds—it was the Duke of Orleans. The duchess told Hume that she was engaged to sup with the President Henault, but that she would not part with him—he must go along. The venerable president overwhelmed him with praises, and told him some flattering things which the dauphin had said of him, which the philosopher was too modest to repeat, even to his friends. But this was only the beginning. Hume found himself approached with reverence by

royalty and aristocracy. He soon grew weary of the compliments of dukes, marshals of France, and foreign ambassadors. He professed that he cared only for the flattery of the ladies, and with this he was overwhelmed. Madame de Pompadour, the powerful mistress of the king, was more gracious to him than to any other man. The Duchess de Choiseul, wife of the favorite, and Prime Minister of France, when she had exhausted the language of praise, sent the Danish ambassador to tell Hume that all she had said had been sincere, and that she desired his friendship and correspondence.

Thus suddenly removed from a cheap lodging at Edinburgh, and from a society of lawyers and divines, among whom he was scarcely tolerated, to receive the homage of princes and dukes, the duchesses and royal mistresses of the politest nation on earth, to find his society not only desired, but contended for by the fairest ladies of France, to hear his praises sounded by royalty and nobility, and to be believed in by every one at Paris as the greatest genius of his own, if not of every age, was to Hume very like the sudden removal of Aladdin from his hovel to the splendid palace of the Genii. Certainly he may well have rubbed his eyes and believed himself in a dream. Fame, which he had so long pursued, had come at last, and the splendid visions which had cheered his painful youth and manhood, were now more than fulfilled. He who but a few days ago had been glad of the company of a few Scottish clergymen, and who often felt ill at ease in their

society, now dispensed his friendship to the wives of prime ministers, and to the proudest nobles of the purest blood of France. He who had never courted the favor of the great now found himself overwhelmed with their attentions. The royal family of France led the crowd of his worshippers. The dauphin declared himself openly his admirer; and a singular scene took place on Hume's presentation to his family, in which three children, each of whom afterwards wore and lost a crown, played a part.

On Hume's presentation to the royal family, each of the three children had prepared a little address with which to welcome the philosopher. The Duke of Berri, a boy of ten years old, afterwards the excellent, amiable, and most unhappy of monarchs, Louis XVI., stepped forward to tell Hume how many friends and admirers he had in France, and that he himself had become one of the number, from the pleasure he had found in reading his works. When he had ended, the Count de Provence, two years younger, and afterwards the restored exile, Louis XVIII., began a little speech to inform him that he had long been anxiously expected in France, and that he expected soon to have great pleasure in reading his History. After him came forward Charles X., the dethroned king of 1830, then a child of four or five, who, having forgotten his harangue, could only mumble a few broken words. Poor children! they could little foresee that they were to be hurled from their ancient thrones by the philosophy whose incarnation they worshipped in Hume!

John Hume, the laird of Ninewells, had two sons, who were now growing up active and sensible youths. Joseph, the elder, named from his grandfather, was at school in Edinburgh, under the care of Professor Ferguson. In the height of his Parisian dissipation, Hume affectionately found time to write and think much about his nephews. The minute account of the habits and studies of Joseph, which Professor Ferguson wrote him, at his desire, marks the interest which he took in his progress. Ferguson wrote that Joseph was a very amiable boy, with quick parts, and that he passed his evenings in reading amusing books, such as his uncle's history. David, the younger, was, however, Hume's favorite, and to him he left the chief part of his property.

Meanwhile the favor of the French made him more than ever sensible of the injustice he had met with from his own countrymen. Viewing from his Parisian pinnacle the obscurity in which he had so long lingered, the philosopher forgot his usual good humor. He remembered how, in Edinburgh, he had been treated by a large party with scarce common civility; how, in London, he had lived a twelvemonth with hardly an acquaintance. In his correspondence with his friends at home, he alludes frequently and with bitterness to these recollections. And even now he believed that his countrymen were still his enemies. Bunbury yet lingered in the secretaryship, although Lord Hertford had refused to have anything to do with him, and Hume's position was still doubtful. A pension of two hundred

pounds a year had been settled upon him on leaving England, but instead of being for life, as he had supposed, it depended on an order from the minister. Many obstacles rose up in the way of his appointment to the secretaryship, and Hume, indignant and disheartened, threatened "*ingrata patria ne ossa quidem habebis.*"

The cloud of incense still rose around him, as if all Paris were concerned to repair the wrongs he had endured from his own countrymen. Louis XIV. had never, in three weeks, suffered so much flattery as fell to the lot of Hume. Wherever he appeared every one joined in the universal laudation. And all this he received with modesty and good humor, and showed no signs of change from that cheerful simplicity which had marked his retired life at Edinburgh. He began to regain his French, which at first had entirely failed him, and was able to enter with more freedom into the incessant round of conversation into which he was thrown.

With the philosophers he fell at once into intimacy. D'Alembert, Buffon, Diderot, and their associates, delighted him. President Hénault, who had the best cook and the best company of Paris, still, though decaying, retained that engaging amiability which made him the delight of his contemporaries. But Hume professed himself best pleased with the great ladies upon whose zeal and devotion he could confidently count.

Besides the coterie of Madame de Boufflers, he fre-

quented all the gay houses of Paris. He supped often at D'Holbach's, and dined with the Duke de Choiseul and the Prince de Conti. One of his intimate friends was Madame Geoffrin. This lady, by singular tact, activity and genius, had gained a wide influence in society, in spite of every disadvantage of birth and fortune. She was one of the leaders of fashion, courted by princes and worshipped by men of letters, and she had formed an exclusive circle into which only the most eminent in rank or literature were allowed to penetrate. Yet Madame Geoffrin was the daughter of a valet de chambre, and the widow of a glass manufacturer. She had been the friend of Madame Tencin, who had gathered around her weekly all the distinguished and noble of Paris. These had descended, by a kind of inheritance, to Madame Geoffrin. On Tencin's death, she threw open her rooms and renewed and enlarged her assemblies. There weekly were gathered Helvetius, D'Alembert, Marmontel, David Hume, and the best intellect of Paris. There, too, came princes, dukes, duchesses, and a crowd of inferior nobility. Madame herself made no visits, but received from all undisputed homage.

Her heart was the best in the world. She employed much time in seeking out poverty and in relieving the distressed. She soothed many a sufferer, and saved from ruin many a worthy artisan and mechanic by her timely encouragement. One weakness she had in the eyes of her atheistical friends which they told with a smile. It was discovered that she was in the habit of

secretly attending the confessional, a trait which she concealed as studiously as if her purpose had been far more unworthy.

With Madame du Deffand, another great leader of the Parisian world, Hume was less intimate. This lady, though blind, was one of the wittiest and most influential of her time. Every one feared her sarcasms. Apparently shut from the world by her want of sight, she was one of the keenest followers of gaiety. Her rooms, like those of Boufflers and Geoffrin, were thronged by all the fashion of Paris. But the blind lady was envious of her rivals, and disliked heartily all who paid them court. Hume, as the favorite and the admirer of Boufflers, could not hope to propitiate Du Deffand.

Another famous woman, who governed Paris by native talent and an alliance with the philosophers, was mademoiselle de L'Espinasse. A natural child, she had been adopted by Madame du Deffand as her companion, and was allowed to appear at her table to aid madame in entertaining her guests. L'Espinasse was plain, deeply marked with small pox, and altogether unattractive in her person. But while listening to the brilliant conversations of the day, her mind by a sudden process gained a wonderful development. She acquired the power of conversing with an eloquence and force that charmed all who came within her circle. Soon she began to throw a spell around the great intellects who frequented the house. Madame du Deffand did not usually make her appearance until six in the evening.

But long before that hour her guests would assemble to listen to the eloquence of her humble companion. As soon as the vain and envious blind woman discovered this treachery, she drove L'Espinasse from her house.

The homeless female was immediately supplied by her friends with a house and furniture, and a pension was procured for her from the crown. She, too, formed a circle of genius and fashion, and became a dangerous rival to her former friend. Du Deffand denounced all who dared to countenance the deserter. She soon lost the brightest star of her galaxy, D'Alembert, who went over to the new coterie, and finally took up his abode in the house of the fair philosopher, who had nursed him during a dangerous sickness. L'Espinasse, however, was wholly unprincipled. She had formed a project of making an advantageous match with a young Spanish noble. The young Spaniard died, and her mind, laboring with grief, consumed and destroyed her delicate frame. She had parted from D'Alembert in anger, and her death threw a shadow of melancholy over the last years of the great philosopher.

In this society, Hume need have no fear of shocking the prejudices of his friends by his skeptical doubts. In fact, he was startled himself by the lengths to which they had gone. At a dinner at D'Holbach's, he remarked that he had never seen an atheist. "You have been a little unfortunate," said the baron, "you are now at table with seventeen."

His life at Paris was varied by excursions into differ-

ent parts of the country. He went with Madame de Boufflers and the Prince de Conti, to the splendid seat of the latter at L'Isle Adam. He visited the Dutchess de Barbantane at Villiers Cotterel. His time passed so agreeably that he half resolved never to leave Paris, but to make the home of his old age among a people so hospitable and kind.

With the Parisian ladies he was all-powerful. The fat and famous Scotch philosopher won hearts that had been cold to the homage of rank and power. If he ventured with Lord Hertford to a masquerade, the room rang with fair voices who seized the opportunity of expressing for him an admiration too great to be uttered in their natural character. No lady's toilet was thought complete without his presence, and his dull, good-humored face seen in an opera box, was sufficient to establish a fashionable reputation. A century earlier the works of Des Cartes had, by a similar rage of novelty, been found upon every toilette table; it was now Hume's productions that adorned the boudoirs of Paris.

Yet in appearance and manners Hume had made little progress since he had awakened the smile of Lord Charlemont, at Turin. He was even fatter, lazier, and less amusing than of old. His French was so bad that he could hardly be understood. Of course he could do little more in society than look good natured. His "broad unmeaning face" was seen at every supper and every fête. He was carried about idol-like, to be fed,

caressed and adored. A droll story is told of his performance in a charade. He was to sit between two of the finest women of Paris, acting the part of sultan. But the royal lover evidently could not find his heart. Instead of his breast he beat "*le ventre et les genoux*," and the only words of love that he could invent were "Ah well, ladies! Indeed! and are you here." These phrases he repeated for a quarter of an hour, when the acute French women ignominiously deposed him. "That man," said one of them, "is only fit to eat veal." Yet he was even more the mode than ever, and rode his triumphal car with a good humor and a simplicity that made many his friends for life, who might otherwise have been only his momentary admirers.

Horace Walpole, ill-natured, envious, and with a peculiar talent for perpetuating his own weaknesses for the amusement of posterity, was in Paris during the height of Hume's deification. The man who could seek to impress upon the sensitive Gray his own importance as the prime minister's son, would hardly find himself sunk into insignificance by the popularity of the philosopher, without redressing his wrongs in his own way. His letters show how exceedingly uncomfortable he was made by this event. The Parisians, he declared, had the worst taste in the world, since of all English authors they preferred Hume and Richardson. "Hume," he exclaims in wonder, "is here treated with perfect veneration. His history, so falsified in many parts, so partial in as many, so very unequal in all its parts, is thought

the standard of writing." Walpole had a strong desire of excelling in literature, which his natural powers did not permit him to gratify; and his disappointment sharpened his malice against the finest writers of the age. Their success was to him an inexpressible crime. He pursues them with affected contempt and jealous criticism. In Goldsmith, he saw only an "inspired idiot;" Johnson he thought a boor, and Hume partial and imperfect.

In the midst of his dissipation, Hume continued to correspond steadily with Robertson, Blair, and the rest of his Edinburgh circle. He did them all the good offices in his power. He recommended their works in Paris, and gave them the fairest opening to fame. For the commendation of the great Mr. Hume was now sufficient to make a reputation. A few faint traces of elation he permitted sometimes to escape him, but this was natural, and could hardly give offence. He was too fond of repeating his own successes, and evidently loved to linger over the notes of applause. Long abstinence had sharpened his appetite for fame, and when the full beaker was presented to his lips, and he had drank to repletion, he naturally displayed his satisfaction.

His friend, Gilbert Elliot, placed his two sons under his care, and desired him to select for them a proper school at Paris, where they could be properly educated. Nothing could exceed Hume's kind attention to his friend's request. He made inquiries among his acquaintances, visited different masters, and was never satisfied

until he had provided the youths with a seminary in all respects satisfactory.

When Adam Smith received the lucrative appointment of tutor to the Duke of Buccleugh, partly from the good offices of Hume, he came abroad with his pupil, apparently with few letters of introduction, and fixed himself at Toulouse. Here he complains, in a letter to Hume, that he knew no one, and was more shut out from society than he had been in provincial Glasgow. Hume sent him letters which opened the way to the best society, and both the duke and the philosopher began to enjoy the pleasant company in which they were thrown. It seems that Hume had a key to a circle into which even a prime minister's son could not penetrate without his aid.

The affair of the secretaryship, meantime, lingered undecided, and Hume was not more reconciled to the English. He wrote to Elliot with such apparent earnestness of his design of settling in France, that his friend grew really alarmed. "Love the French," he cried, "as much as you will, but continue an Englishman." To which Hume replied, with unphilosophical warmth, "I do not believe that there is one Englishman in fifty, who, if he heard I had broke my neck to-night, would be sorry: some because I am not a whig; some because I am not a Christian—and all because I am a Scotchman. Can you seriously talk of continuing an Englishman? Am I, or are you, an Englishman? I am a citizen of the world; but if I were to adopt any country,

it would be that in which I live at present, and from which I am determined never to depart, unless a war drives me into Switzerland or Italy." Hume looked too much at the past, and remembered too well the cruel opposition which had impeded his early growth in fame. But at that moment he had little right to complain even of Englishmen. His books, Millar wrote, were selling in London with unrivalled activity. The History, after many reverses, had at length become an acknowledged classic. By Lord Hertford's friendship, too, he had a fair prospect of political success. Already he had a considerable pension from the English government, and he had every cause for expecting a new increase of fortune and a higher rise in station. For a quiet student who had never forced himself upward by politics, or courted the patronage of the great, he had attained remarkable advancement.

True, Hume had not become a peer, like Mansfield or Camden, nor had he amassed a vast fortune like Calcraft or Fox, but as a philosopher, he should have enjoyed his own peculiar success as loftier than any other fate. At forty he had been content with fifty pounds a year and an humble position. He was now a man of note, and famous, rich, and growing richer; yet his complaints grow louder as he rises in station; success was more fatal to his philosophy than adversity.

Millar, delighted with the rapid sale of the History, was constantly pressing him to finish another volume. Hume professed to dread the rage and violence of

party, and the hatred of the Scots which he believed to be the ruling impulse of England. This, he assures the astonished bookseller, had made him frequently resolve never to set his foot upon English ground. "I dread," he writes, "if I should undertake a more modern history, the impertinence and ill manners to which it would expose me." He had seriously intended, however, to write another volume, to embrace the reigns of William and Anne. But the only historical labor he seems to have performed while abroad, was to examine King James's autograph memoirs in the Scots' college at Paris. These did not seem to him of material importance, and they must have been unfavorable to his Jacobite theories. "All the discoveries I made in King James's memoirs," he says, "make 'against himself and his brother."

George Grenville, the English minister, positively declined to appoint Hume secretary of the embassy; and this refusal, more than anything else, convinced him of the ingratitude of his country. Fortunately his displeasure was soon after appeased. His friends Oswald, Elliot, and Home were active in his favor. The Marquis of Hertford persisted in requiring his appointment, and threatened, in case his request was refused, to send in his own resignation. A weightier influence was brought to bear. The good Countess de Boufflers, who had some claims upon the Duke of Bedford, was now allowed by Hume to intercede. She wrote to the duke, that the time was come when he could prove to her his

friendship; and that on this occasion she would rest the sincerity of all his professions of regard. The duke, who received her letter in the country, wrote to her that he would immediately hasten up to town, and if he had any credit with the king and the ministry, her solicitation should be effectual. Bunbury soon after was made secretary for Ireland, and Hume secretary to the French embassy. He wrote the following letter to his brother, announcing his appointment:—

“COMPIEGNE, 14th July, 1765.

“DEAR BROTHER,

There arrived yesterday a messenger from England, with my commission under the great seal. My appointment, as I told you, £1,200 a year. I have also £300 for my equipage, and three hundred ounces of plate for my table. This is the fair side of the picture. The misfortune is, that General Conway, the ambassador's brother, is secretary of state. The Duke of Grafton, his nephew, is the other secretary. You still say better and better. Not at all. My Lord Hertford goes for England in a few days, and leaves the burden of the embassy on me. Still you say where is the harm of all this? You are come to years of discretion, and can govern yourself. Wait a little, dear brother. Lord Hertford goes lord lieutenant to Ireland, and there is the end of the ambassador, and probably of the secretary.

“It is true, I can count upon Lord Hertford's friendship as much as any man's in the world. One day last spring he came into my room, and told me that he heard of many people who endeavored by their caresses to persuade me that I ought to remain in France. But that he hoped I would embrace no scheme of life which would ever separate him and me. He now loves me as much as ever he esteemed me, and wished we might pass our lives together. He had resolved several times to have opened his heart so far to me; but being a man of few words and no professions, he had still delayed it, and he now felt himself much

relieved by this declaration of his desires and intentions." I know that Lord Hertford will not go to Ireland, unless he be allowed to name the secretary for that kingdom. Perhaps he may think his son, Lord Beauchamp, too young for that office, in which case I may very probably expect it, and it is an office of between £3,000 and £4,000 a year, and stands next in dignity to all the great offices of the state. In all cases the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has many and great things to give, of which I should certainly expect one.

Still you say this is all better and better. Not at all. You know the fluctuations of English politics. Perhaps, before this, the whole present system is overturned. Lord Hertford, who, while he remained here, was a man of no party, is involved with his friends. All is turned topsyturvy; and before next winter, perhaps, I am at your fireside without office or employment."

With these doubtful, but alluring prospects, Hume opened his secretaryship. He is allowed to have shown himself a clever diplomatist. When Lord Hertford left Paris, he became chargé-d'affaires. He conducted several important affairs with tact and accuracy; and Lord Brougham, a competent judge, bears witness to his skill and judgment. So pleased was Lord Hertford with his conduct, that when he went over as lord lieutenant to Ireland, he endeavored to have him made his secretary, together with Lord Beauchamp; but, finding the cry against the Scots in England too strong to suffer the appointment, he obtained him a pension of four hundred pounds. It is pleasant to observe that, while the prospect of the secretaryship floated before him, he wrote to his brother that a splendid fortune was awaiting him, and that he hoped to have it in his power to

do service to his friends—particularly his nephews. But when the vision dissipated, he was not depressed.

Lord Hertford, anxious for his society, wrote to him that he had prepared a room for him in Dublin Castle, and Hume replied that he would hasten to Ireland immediately upon leaving Paris. He could not help, however, lamenting the loss of that cheerful society in which he had moved with such applause. His friends, too, were eager to retain him in Paris, and offered to procure him the means of living at ease in that city; but this would have led him into engagements with great lords and ladies, which he was unwilling to incur. They probably proposed to obtain him a pension, or were willing to have advanced his fortune out of their own wealth. He received and refused at the same time an offer from Lord Hertford, of increasing his income, which he thought “savored of greediness.” His patron wrote to him that he might have the office of Usher of the Black Rod in Ireland, worth £900 a year; which, by paying £300 to a deputy, would leave him £600. But Hume magnanimously refused this offer. He would be content with what he had.

Still he lingered at Paris. Skeptical upon all subjects, he could not decide where to fix his home. The prospect of fixing himself in Dublin repelled him. Cold, gloomy, and unfriendly, London had not a charm. For settling in Edinburgh he professed himself too young and too gay. Sometimes he projected a journey to Rome, and then his cave of Circe, delightful Paris would not

give up its spell. The friend of princes and great ladies, how could he again mingle with the plain friends of his youth. Accustomed to a constant round of amusement, how could he bear the dull and formal routine of Edinburgh life! At once he wrote to Blair to let his house for thirty-five pounds; he would settle for life at Paris. But before the letter was sent, softer thoughts broke in upon philosophy. The tender ties of relationship, of old association, and of national regard, drew him towards his natural home. The spell in which he had been prisoned broke, and he saw that his charming Paris was not the spot that really enchained his affections. He loved better the bleak land where his ancestors had cultivated their little estate, where his brother and sister, and his nephews were looking for his arrival; where his old friends of the Poker Club and the Philosophic Society were wondering how "honest David" would look and act after his triumphant career abroad, he loved the streets and stones of provincial Edinburgh, where he had been abused and treated with scarce common civility, better than the city where he had been deified and adored. So Hume added a postscript to his letter, telling Blair that the thought of abandoning his country filled him with affright, and that the house in James' court would soon have its old tenant.

A strange and troublesome companion fate had provided him with—a repulsive and pitiful shadow of his own skepticism, to return with him to England. In spite of his doubting theories Hume had contrived to be

cheerful. He smiled at the changes of fortune, and in the face of death and eternity. But poor Jean Jaques Rousseau was never known to be any thing but miserable. He went through the world lamenting. Hume's morals were so pure that many a believer might well have imitated him. Rousseau was so repulsively vicious, that when he came among the simple cottagers of the Jura, whose peaceful lot he was wont to praise, they pelted him with stones. In Hume genius was the growth of a mind eminently sound. No wild freaks of vanity, or shouts of crazy melancholy had ever led the world to suspect his sanity. But poor Rousseau was mad. Except when engaged in composition, and when at times his matchless genius seemed to break out into exclamations of divine harmony, the best account that can be given of him is that he was a lunatic. If he were not he was certainly a mountebank, and, with a knavish smile, enjoyed the sympathy which he won from the world by his afflictions, and the notice which he gained by his eccentricities.

Rousseau, persecuted by the French government, had fled to Neufchatel, whence the Earl Mareschal, the governor of the province, had written in his favor to Hume. Afterwards, he took up his abode in a village, in the passes of the Jura, and here, in this wild region, among a simple people, the apostle of nature and feeling should have been content. The simple villagers, however, were soon shocked by the conduct of their imprudent guest. He assumed the Armenian dress, and sent

for his mistress, Le Vasseur. The people would have stoned him, and he fled. His next refuge was the island of St. Pierre, in the lake of Brienne, where he lingered, hesitating whether to seek repose in Prussia or in England. He passed to Strasbourg, and here he received a letter from Hume, inviting him to accompany him to England. He decided to go thither, and came up to Paris.

Hume's interest in Rousseau was that of one man of genius for another in misfortune. He was filled with pity to see the author of "Emile" and the "Social Contract" sunk in indigence, overwhelmed by persecution, sick, and threatened with the approach of age; and he remained generously blind to those repulsive faults which disfigured his singular genius. It is likely, too, that Rousseau's character was far less known to his contemporaries than it has become to posterity; while his genius and his misfortunes won him unbounded sympathy and veneration.

Without a blush, Rousseau walked the streets of Paris, in his Armenian dress, a fur cap, caftan and vest. A decree of Parliament and an order for his arrest were still threatening him, yet he showed no signs of fear. His friends finally lodged him in the Temple, a kind of sanctuary, where he could be free from arrest until he should cross the channel.

Hume was not yet disenchanted. The strange apparel and an affectation of a love for solitude only increased his opinion of his friend's wisdom and virtue. Paris,

meanwhile, went mad with pity and admiration for Rousseau. Great ladies teased Hume for an introduction to his friend, who affected to shrink from their attention. Roleaus of gold were thrust into his hand for Rousseau, who steadily refused to receive them. Hume asserted that he could have raised £50,000 for him in a fortnight had he permitted it. His maid, Le Vasseur, who was very plain and awkward, was more talked of than the Princess of Morocco, or the Countess of Egmont, two stars of fashion of the day. His very dog, with even less personal attractions than his mistress, stood high in fame and honor.

To Hume, Rousseau seemed all modesty, good-nature, and gentleness. He had the air of a man of the world rather than that of a philosopher. Plain and small in appearance, his countenance was the finest in the world. He wrote and spoke solely from the impulses of his genius, and imagined himself sometimes in communication with the Deity. He had more genius and less sociability than Socrates; the sight of strangers gave him great agony, and his love of solitude was not a pretence but natural and real. His Armenian dress, Rousseau cunningly assured his friend, was adopted from physical infirmity. Such was the character which Hume gave of the Genevese in his letters to his Edinburgh friends.

They left France together, in January, 1766, and Hume was to see his beloved Paris no more. When they first touched the English soil, the land of freedom, Rousseau, probably to Hume's wonder and alarm, flung

his arms about his neck and covered his face with kisses and tears. It was bad enough that he would persist in wearing his fantastical costume, and how they escaped being pelted by the London mob it is difficult to imagine. Rousseau, for some time after their arrival, continued in a sane mood, but Hume found *Le Vasseur* unbearable. She was wicked, quarrelsome, and tattling; so stupid that she could never tell the year she lived in, nor the day of the month or week, and yet holding a control over her master as absolute as that of a nurse over a child.

After much trouble, Hume provided his friend with a comfortable home in the country, with a Mr. Townsend, a gentleman of fortune, and at the same time solicited for him a pension from the king. *Le Vasseur*, meantime, had been seized upon by Boswell, who was always in search of notoriety. The following extract shows that Hume thought the famous biographer mad.

"A letter," he writes, "has come to me from Guy, the bookseller, by which I learn that mademoiselle sets out in company with a friend of mine, a young gentleman, very good-humored, very agreeable, and very mad. He visited Rousseau in his mountains, who gave him a recommendation to Paoli, the King of Corsica, where this gentleman, whose name is Boswell, went last summer, in search of adventures. He has such a rage for literature that I dread some event fatal to our friend's honor. You remember the story of Terentia, who was first married to Cicero, then to Sallust, and at last, in

her old age, married a young nobleman, who imagined that she must possess some secret which would convey to him eloquence and genius." Boswell, fortunately, contented himself with doing the part of the gallant, without aspiring to any nearer connection with the stupid and vicious fair, or the world might have wanted its best biography.

Rousseau, from the first, was greatly disappointed by the coldness of the reception he met with in England. He evidently supposed that in the land of freedom the author of the Social Contract would be followed by troops of admirers, and would be welcomed by the court and the people. In Paris he had aroused a wild enthusiasm, that was probably never equalled. But far different was his fate in London. At first he was gazed at with cold curiosity. At the play, Hume repeats with exultation, the king and queen looked more at Rousseau than at the actors. But, in a short time, this feeling passed away. He sank into complete neglect. A few noblemen and ladies were prevailed upon by Hume to visit him; but when he pretended to desire solitude, the English believed his professions and left him to himself. Such a fate he had hardly expected. It was unbearable. His amiability and cheerfulness, which had so charmed Hume, changed rapidly into bitterness and discontent. The Parisian philosophers, who hated Rousseau, had prophesied that Hume would not conduct him to Calais without a quarrel. "You nourish," said they, "a viper in your bosom." And Hume had already begun to fear

their warning might prove true. Rousseau quarreled with him about a chaise, which was prepared to carry him down to his rural solitude. For an hour he sat in Hume's company, sullen and silent; at last, he suddenly rose up, threw his arms around his friend's neck, kissed him with great warmth, covered his face with his tears, and asked his forgiveness in so touching a manner, that Hume, too, melted into tears.

"I now understand perfectly his aversion to company," Hume writes to Blair; "which appears so surprising in a man well qualified for the entertainment of company, and which the greater part of the world takes for affectation. He has frequent and long fits of the spleen, from the state of his mind or body—call it what you please—and from his extreme sensibility of temper, during that disposition, company is a torment to him."

Rousseau was far from a believer in his own theories. "He dreaded," he told Hume, "that his writings were good for nothing, and that all his theories were full of extravagances." This, at least, may have been an honest conviction. A gentleman who came to visit him at Strasburg, told him that he was educating his son upon the plan laid down in "Emile." "So much the worse for you and him," said the half-crazed philosopher.

At this time died Dr. Jardine, Hume's old associate of the Poker Club and the Edinburgh friendly meetings. He was pastor of Tron church, and a man of much ability. Hume and Blair lament over him in their let-

ters as an irreparable loss. "Poor Jardine," writes Blair to Hume, "I knew you would join with me in dropping very cordial tears over his memory. What pleasant hours have I passed with you and him. We have lost a most agreeable companion as it was possible for any man to be, and a very useful man to us here, in all public affairs. I thought of you at the very first as one who would sensibly feel the blank he will make in our society, when you come again. But when are you to come?"

In the mansion of Wooton, in Derbyshire, among wild scenery, not unlike that of the passes of the Jura, Hume, after great trouble, had found a resting-place for Rousseau. The exile at first wrote to his friend that everything around him was delightful. Here nothing seemed to disturb his happiness: he had no society, no books, and no persecutors: he could botanize in the fields, or wander imaginatively along the rocky sides of the mountains. His beloved Le Vasseur, escaping from the gallantries of Boswell, was at his side, as ugly and as wicked as ever. Mr. Davenport, who seems to have felt a real sympathy for him, had good-humoredly consented to fix his board at thirty pounds a year, and he was independent. Hume, for a moment, might have flattered himself that he had satisfied the whims of the man of feeling, and placed him where he could be at rest.

Unhappy philosopher! he little foresaw that he was on the brink of his first and last literary quarrel.

Through the storms of controversy which he had excited, he had hitherto glided serenely, without showing a ruffle upon his plumage, or condescending to return a blow. At fifty-five habit had conspired with reason to render him dull to the clamor of an adversary. And yet, between Le Vasseur and Horace Walpole, even he was drawn into a controversy.

Madame Le Vasseur had a dispute with Mr. Davenport's venerable housekeeper about a kettle and some cinders. The nurse enlisted the philosopher on her side. The family was rent by the dispute, and the amiable Mr. Davenport found himself fallen under the indignant displeasure of the man of feeling. Another fatal circumstance occurred. Horace Walpole, perhaps, not wholly without Hume's knowledge, wrote a letter to Rousseau, as if from the King of Prussia. This letter appeared in the morning papers. It was a happy and bitter burlesque upon Rousseau's adventures. It ridiculed his reveries, his misfortunes, his eccentricities, and his persecutions. Walpole had clear conception of all the baser parts of human nature, and there could not have been written a better parody upon Rousseau's account of his own misfortunes.

In his solitude among the magnificence of nature, a terrible idea now arose in the mind of the misanthrope. He believed that a conspiracy had been entered into by the philosophers of Paris, his enemies on the continent and David Hume, to turn him into ridicule. Nothing less would satisfy his self-importance than

that he had been lured into England by his treacherous friend for this dreadful purpose. Upon this idea he mused long and deeply, concealing the conviction in his own bosom. He may, perhaps, have communicated with and taken counsel of Le Vasseur; but of no one else. Reflection convinced him that he was not mistaken, and he wrote to General Conway that, although he had thought himself armed against all disasters, a new and unimagined one was now arisen to trouble his mind.

Hume, meanwhile, was kindly busy among his friends pressing for Rousseau's pension; he finally obtained it on the condition that it should be secret; but Rousseau refused to receive it upon such terms. Hume then prevailed that it should be granted without the need of secrecy, and wrote to Rousseau to know if he would accept it before allowing it to be publicly proclaimed. The latter was now convinced of the justice of his suspicions: such kindness could not be without design. He wrote to Hume indignantly rejecting his favors, proclaiming the discovery of his vile plot, and declaring that he would have no further commerce with his benefactor. "Adieu, monsieur," he said "this is the last letter you will receive from me."

What was Hume's surprise! until this moment he had heard nothing but exclamations of grateful veneration, and had been overwhelmed with tears, kisses, and embraces. And now he was renounced for ever. "Tell me," he wrote in return, "what has given you offence.

Tell me of what am I accused. Tell me the man who accuses me."

It would have been hard for Rousseau to say. He only knew that from being the wonder and delight of the continent, pursued by multitudes of admirers, and followed by the malice of kings, he had suddenly, in England, sunk into neglect. No long line of pilgrims visited the rocky ledges of Derbyshire to do homage to the lover of solitude, no princes and fair ladies any more contended for his society, or thrust into his unwilling hand great rouleaux of gold. He felt himself a martyr and a victim. Lured by the traitor Hume, he had destroyed himself by making himself obscure. But this was not enough. He had become ridiculous. All Europe was laughing at the King of Prussia's letter, and who but the malevolent Hume could have written that dreadful epistle. It was plain that Hume was the author of this last and greatest of calamities, and had brought him into England only to hold him up to scorn.

Such thoughts disturbed his unquiet mind. "He's uneasy," wrote Mr. Davenport, "frets perpetually, and looks terribly." He continued to meditate upon the circumstances of Hume's conduct towards him, and found everywhere food for suspicion. At length, after much reflection and labor, he believed he could convict the traitor. He composed a long letter to Hume, written in his usual difficult and beautiful hand-writing, which, he was certain, must overwhelm the treacherous friend with shame and self-reproach.

Anything that Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote was certain to be a masterpiece of genius and of folly. Such was this letter. Its strain of noble indignation bears away the sympathies of the reader and arrays them against the unlucky Hume. Every line of it seems to prove that Rousseau was sincere, and that Hume had betrayed a friendship the tenderest and most truthful that the world had ever seen. Charges the most absurd become probable under the glow of honest feeling with which they are uttered. Mild suspicions, even to reasonable minds, grow terrible. Rousseau, poor, helpless, persecuted, and confiding, is seized upon by the monstrous Scot, and treated with inhuman cruelty. He is betrayed to a most fearful doom, the nature of which he but dimly indicates, and honest David Hume is his betrayer.

Two facts he adduces on which to found his theory: one was that Hume when they had once slept together in the same room, had muttered in French, in his sleep, "*I have Jean Jacques Rousseau.*" These significant words had fixed themselves in Rousseau's memory, and he had meditated upon them until they seemed the key to all Hume's treachery. Another fact was that Hume, while sitting with him in his own room, had thrown upon him a mysterious look. To Rousseau that one glance was more meaning than an evil eye. He describes it as follows: "One evening after supper, as we were sitting silent by the fireside, I caught his eyes fixed upon me, as indeed happens very often, and that in a

manner of which it is difficult to give any idea ; at that time he gave me a steadfast piercing look mingled with a sneer, which greatly disturbed me. To get rid of my embarrassment, I endeavored to look full at him in my turn, but in fixing my eyes on his, I felt the most inexpressible terror, and was soon obliged to turn them away. The speech and physiognomy of the good David are those of an honest man, but where, great God, did this honest man borrow those eyes which he fixes upon his friends.

“The impression of this look remained with me, and gave me much uneasiness. My trouble increased even to a degree of fainting, and if I had not been relieved by a flood of tears, I must have been suffocated. Presently after this I was seized with the most violent remorse. I despised myself till at length in a transport which I still remember with delight, I sprang on his neck and embraced him eagerly, while almost choked and sobbing with tears, I cried out in broken accents, ‘No, no ! David Hume cannot be treacherous : if he be not the best of men, he must be the basest.’ David Hume politely returned my embraces and gently tapping me on the back, repeated several times, in a placid tone, ‘Why, what, my dear sir?’ He said nothing more. I felt my heart yearn within me, we went to bed and I set out, the next day, for the country.”

Hume was no match in letter-writing for his gifted opponent. To so much feeling he had nothing to oppose but reason. He wrote a reply to Rousseau, which

showed that even philosophy could not calm his indignation against so much ingratitude, baseness and malevolence. The fatal words he could not deny, because he could not remember what he had said in his sleep. He hinted, however, that it was not likely he should dream in French. The mysterious look he endeavored to explain away. He closed his correspondence with the Genevese in the following language, and for ever: "I shall enter into no detail with regard to your letter; you yourself well know that all the other articles of it are without foundation. I shall only add in general, that I enjoyed, about a month ago, an uncommon pleasure in thinking that in spite of many difficulties, I had, by assiduity and care, and even beyond my most sanguine expectations, provided for your repose, honor, and fortune. But that pleasure was soon embittered by finding that you had wantonly and voluntarily thrown away all those advantages, and were become the declared enemy of your own repose, honor, and fortune. I cannot be surprised, after this, that you are my enemy. Adieu, and for ever."

A most lamentable termination to a remarkable friendship! Two great geniuses had but a little while ago professed for each other unbounded love and esteem. The one governed the reason, as the other the feeling of his age. They were the most eminent men of their time. The eyes of the world were fixed upon them. Their professions of friendship were notorious, and the world demanded from them at least consistency. And

now they were become the bitterest of foes, preparing to dart fierce strokes against each other's reputation, and to join in a struggle to dash one another from the pinnacle of fame. It was plain that their quarrel must soon become public, and that Europe would ring with the laughter of their enemies.

Certainly Rousseau could not have chosen a better way of rescuing himself from the neglect into which he had fallen, than by nourishing this quarrel. His poor vanity probably conspired with a petulant humor to urge him to attack Hume. In England he was like a knight errant in search of adventure, who could find no giants or monsters worthy of attack. There were no kings to persecute, no mob to stone him. He was desolate and insignificant. But by this eloquent attack upon an unmasked traitor he was sure to become notorious. Here was a "persecution" bitterer than that of kings and priests, because it came from a treacherous friend. Here was suffering the most acute, inflicted by a rival philosopher. Rousseau might start at once from insignificance into the most afflicted of mankind, and he resolved to lament before the world this climax to his woes.

Poor Hume was not only provoked but mortified. To him the quarrel could only do harm. He who had passed for the most amiable of mankind and the most constant of friends, was now to have suspicion thrown upon his good nature. Everywhere Rousseau had hosts of admirers, who had fallen captive to the seductions of

his genius, and what a shout of detestation must arise from each of these against the betrayer of their idol! Evidently cool reason would be no match for exaggerated feeling, and however perfect might be Hume's defence, he felt that he still must be thought by many cruel and unjust.

And what should he now say to his clerical friends, he who had so often scoffed at the wrangling and ill manners of controversial parsons! He, the prince of unbelievers, was now as ready to abuse and vilify a rival skeptic, as ever Warburton had been to abuse himself. What a spectacle for the parsons! The two high priests of skepticism hating, struggling, and reviling each other in the face of all Europe!

He wrote hastily to Blair not to show the letters he had written to him in praise of Rousseau "to a single mortal." "He is the blackest and most atrocious villain," he wrote, "beyond comparison, that now exists in the world." This is not gentler language than the "viper" of his Parisian friends; their knowledge of Rousseau had evidently been deeper than his own. He had neglected their warning, and had now to lament his generous simplicity.

Never quarrel made greater sensation. Hume wrote an account of it to the Baron D'Holbach, which was instantly spread around Paris. The malicious philosophers enjoyed the conflict between the two rival stars. The daily papers caught up the exaggerated reports, and published them, to the delight of scandal lovers. The

courts of France and Prussia rang with the dispute. In England it excited the interest of the king and queen: they even requested to see the letters which had passed between Hume and Rousseau, before printing, and read them with avidity.

These papers Hume had prepared for the press, to set in a clear light with the public his conduct towards his late companion. He thought that no one could read the account of all that he had done in friendship for Rousseau, without becoming convinced of his own fidelity, and of Rousseau's base ingratitude. He consulted, however, with his friends, as to the propriety of publishing this statement. Smith, who was in Paris, advised him to publish nothing, and assured him that all his friends there agreed in that opinion. D'Alembert, D'Holbach, the wise Turgot, united in this advice. Good-hearted Madame de Boufflers wrote to him, begging him to show himself more than human by sparing the unhappy misanthrope, who had deserved his anger. King George of England and his queen, Hume heard, were also of this opinion, and he hesitated.

But, at a meeting of his friends, the philosophers at Paris, a new resolution was taken. They decided that he should publish, and D'Alembert was selected to convey to him this advice. It was probably an impulse of malice that led to this change in their sentiments. They hated Rousseau, and would have been glad to have crushed him, and they made Hume their instrument to accomplish this design. Better had he listened

to the wise counsels of Adam Smith, who assured him that if he bore awhile a little ridicule the affair would be forgotten in a fortnight; or to the Countess de Boufflers, who begged him to remain "le bon David."

Undecided, he sent the papers over to his Parisian friends, to publish if they thought proper, and they were published. The pamphlet amused and excited the continent. Voltaire, from Ferney, wrote Hume a note of congratulation, relating at the same time his own quarrel with Rousseau. Kings, ministers, priests, and ladies in every court in Europe, were interested in the affair, and Rousseau had the satisfaction of finding himself once more talked of in all the circles of the great.

Before the publication, Rousseau had stated that Hume would not dare to publish their correspondence, or that if he did so, the letters would be falsified. Hume left the originals at the British Museum for inspection.

Horace Walpole, as eager as Rousseau for notoriety, endeavored to gain it by joining himself to the great literary dispute. Very needlessly, he published a narrative of his own connection with the affair, in which he owned the letter from the King of Prussia, and fairly achieved for himself a kind of parasitic fame. When, soon after, he went over to Paris, he became, from this publication, "the mode;" was petted by the fine ladies in a manner which completely overturned his little prudence; and thus, by mingling in the affairs of greater men, gained a prominence which had been denied to him as the prime minister's son.

Rousseau, meanwhile, remained quietly at his Derbyshire retreat, regularly drawing his pension. But a new and overpowering fear began to grow up in his diseased imagination. Horrors, like those of a nightmare, brooded over him. He imagined that he had been lured over to England not only to lose his reputation but his life. General Conway, he thought, and the great nobles of England, were in a conspiracy to destroy him. He was now, he believed, a state prisoner, and he wrote a moving letter to Conway, begging for liberty. He warned the general, that it would not be safe to assassinate him privately, and that he was too well known to be made away with without inquiry. He promised, in case his prayer was granted, to suppress the memoirs he was then writing, which, he supposed, had filled the British ministry with alarm, and offered to continue to receive his pension as a pledge of his sincerity.

Suddenly, driven mad by his terror, he fled from Wooton. "I can't for the life of me find out where my wild philosopher has fled," wrote Davenport. He left behind him all his baggage, thirty pounds in money, and took with him only mademoiselle. A week after, Mr. Davenport received from him a letter so melancholy and so touching that he could not but be moved. He had been living at an inn at Spalding, in Leicestershire, but appeared to be heartily tired of his new residence. Next, the Chancellor of England received a letter from him, begging for a guard of soldiers to protect him from

his fancied enemies, and to conduct him out of the kingdom. But at the moment when this letter was written, he was visited by a country clergyman, who found him cheerful, composed, and good humored. Finally, he went to Dover. The sight of the sea, he said, assured him of liberty; he took the packet-boat and returned to Paris, having made himself as notorious as possible during his visit to England.

In Paris he found himself neglected. He changed his dress, took the name of Renou, and lived at Cliché, about a league from the capital, occupied with his "Confessions." He afterwards attributed his strange conduct while in England to its foggy atmosphere, which had filled his mind with gloom and discontent.

In every instance Hume's conduct to Rousseau was admirable, except, perhaps, in the publication of their correspondence. He had invited him to England with the generous design of providing him with quiet and repose. He procured him, after great trouble, an agreeable residence: he obtained him a pension. Even after Rousseau had attempted to wound him, he continued his kind offices. He procured the pension to be continued; induced General Conway to continue his patronage; and even wrote to the French court in his favor after he had fled to Paris. Hume's design in publishing the correspondence was the protection of his own character. This he always guarded with jealous care. He cared little what his enemies might urge against his writings or his speculative opinions; but of his morality there

must be no doubt. Rousseau assailed his reputation for sincerity and truth, and Hume, in his anger, thought himself bound to prove Rousseau the blackest and most atrocious of villains. This was not hard to do. But he forgot that philosophers were bound to set an example to their race, by carrying on their controversies with good manners.

This episode was one of the most painful of his life. It shocked his philosophy more rudely than all the brutality of Warburton, or the national hatred of the English; and, in the account of his own life, Hume carefully neglects to say a word of his unlucky connection with the Genevese.

Age had now come upon Hume, or was threatening him. He was looking around for a home to linger out his last years and die in. In the summer of 1766 he went to Scotland. He was now rich to superfluity. An invitation from General Conway to be Under Secretary of State, recalled him to England. This office he discharged with great ability, until July, 1768, when Conway was superseded. While under secretary, he wrote the following account of his daily life to Blair:—"My way of life here is very uniform, and by no means disagreeable. I pass all the forenoon in the secretary's house, from ten to three, where there arrive from time to time the messengers, that bring me all the secrets of the kingdom, and indeed of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I am seldom hurried; but have leisure, at intervals, to take up a book, or write a private letter, or

converse with any friend that may call for me, and from dinner to bed-time is all my own."

Hume's friendship with the Hertford family had thus been the means of elevating him to this considerable political station; nor is this a single instance of the usefulness of the British aristocracy in bringing into notice England's finest intellect. Burke owed his prominence to the patronage of the Marquis of Rockingham. Swift had been cherished by both Bolingbroke and Oxford. The connection in these and many other instances was of common advantage. The noble lord, born to power, wanted some talented assistant, who could supply him with the intellect to which he was not born; or the successful politician, who had himself risen to eminence by his talents, found an useful companion in the brilliant man of genius. Hume was doubtless the adviser and confidant of Lord Hertford: he was conscious of the value of his own services, and speaks very confidently to his patrons of his "claims" to their good offices.

The position of the two parties, however, is certainly not natural. It is the man of intellect who should govern the state, and should be in the situation to bestow favors. And yet, the highly-educated and generous-spirited nobility of England deserve applause for the patronage which they have extended to so many eminent men. Lovers of intellect themselves, and often capable of excelling in its higher walks, they have ever retained a sympathy for the man of letters struggling for eminence and eager for renown.

London was now the centre of a literary circle, more splendid than had shone since the days of Halifax and Pope. Not three years had passed since Johnson had founded the Literary Club. Burke, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and Gibbon, were among the celebrated subjects of the lexicographer's tyranny. Mrs. Montagu had commenced those assemblies, after the manner of the Parisians, where gathered the eminent writers, the accomplished nobility, and the fairest women of the day. Garrick was restoring to the stage Shakspeare, as the dramatist had never before been exhibited. Hannah More was now staying with the famous actor, recording in her letters the brilliant company at Mrs. Montagu's, and the gruff bearing of the omnipotent Johnson.

Johnson, two years older than Hume, like him, had boldly adopted the profession of a man of letters. He had met with a worse fate. In his vain efforts to live by writing, he had almost starved. Vagrant as he was, he had walked the streets of London at night without a shelter; he had written to his bookseller, and signed after his name the pitiful word "dinnerless." His poor wife had died in their misery; and he was forced to write a considerable work to pay for his mother's funeral.

And now Johnson, too, had triumphed. Out of all his miseries he had risen up to be the lord of literature. He had a sure revenue from the booksellers, and a pension from the king. He had gathered around him a

band of literary men, who had learned that the publisher was a better patron than Lyttleton or Chesterfield, and he was now moving the centre of that brilliant literary system which had suddenly grown up in London.

Yet Hume and Johnson never met. Their common sympathy, as resolute and successful authors, never conquered their common dislike. Johnson hated an infidel and a Scot; Hume probably despised the unphilosophic genius of his enemy. During his stay in London as under-secretary, Hume seems to have avoided the society of English authors, perhaps with a recollection that when he was last in the capital, they had studiously avoided him. He was never admitted into the Literary Club, and probably never sought admission. He refused Blair's offer of introducing him to Percy, the collector of ancient ballad poetry, alleging as an excuse that the men of letters at the capital had no common rendezvous, and were wholly sunk and lost in the general torrent of the world. Had Hume and Johnson met, what conversation might have ensued? The rude, uncourtly, desponding Christian, and the smiling, good-humored deist!

With all the houses of the great, Hume was familiar. Society now courted the man whom it had lately despised. He still helped Scottish authors. In 1767 his friend Ferguson published an "Essay on the History of Civil Society," which was generally admired. Hume, who had at first advised the author to withhold it from

the press, now gladly sent him an account of its success. It had delighted Lord Mansfield, he wrote, and the Archbishop of York thought it better than Montesquieu.

Soon after, an imprudent joke upon Oswald's brother, who had been made an Irish bishop, lost him the friendship of his old correspondent. A trifle served to part these ancient allies, so frail is human affection. Millar was still pressing Hume to continue the History, and offering him almost any price. But he had fallen into a lazy, cheerful, careless mode of living, that would not permit of any new labor; and besides, what motive had he for writing? Money he had more than he could use. Fame he had more than any man living; and he was happy in indolence. Among his visions he sometimes, however, cherished the design of extending his History, and forgot the swift coming of old age.

Smollett, who had long sunk into neglect as an historian, and who was now in bad health and poor, he endeavored in vain to serve with the ministry. They refused to give him even a small consulship in Italy. He also became acquainted with Gibbon, whose unpublished history of Switzerland he criticised, praised, and condemned.

His love for England had not increased with age. "Oh, how I long," he cried, half seriously, in a letter to Elliot, "to see America and the East Indies revolted, totally and finally—the revenue reduced to half—public credit fully discredited by bankruptcy—the third of London in ruins, and the rascally mob subdued. I

think I am not too old to despair of witnessing these blessings." It was the moment of the Wilkes excitement, when a dissolute and dishonest politician had become the hero of the London mob. Hume disliked Wilkes and all his defenders: among these was Lord Chatham, against whom the philosopher had another ground of enmity. Chatham had been the violent foe of the History of England, a crime which Hume never pardoned.

"Lord Chatham," he writes, "is a greater paradox than ever; is seen at home by no human creature—absolutely by none!—rides twenty miles every day—is seen on the road, and appears in perfect health, but will now speak to no creature he meets. I am much persuaded all is quackery: he is not mad—that is, not madder than usual." Again, he says: "This villain (Chatham) is to thunder against the violation of the Bill of Rights, in not allowing the county of Middlesex to choose its member. Think of the impudence of that fellow and his quackery—and his cunning—and his audaciousness."

Hume frequently met Dr. Franklin, with whom he conversed upon topics of political economy, and they formed for each other a lasting esteem. He lingered in London until the beginning of 1769, when, notwithstanding pressing invitations from Madame de Boufflers to visit Paris, he at length returned to Edingburgh. Although but fifty-eight, he began to feel the weight of years. He was now worth twelve hundred pounds a

year, a sum equal to double that amount in the present day. He came back to his own house, but finding it too small set himself to building a new one.

His tory leanings grew with his years. He amused himself preparing a new edition of his History, from which he carefully expunged all traces of whiggery. He also came back to the Poker Club, which met every Friday, kept the minutes in his turn, and was no doubt equal in claret drinking to any other member.

His house in the new town being finished, he removed thither. He criticised good-humoredly Macpherson's English History, and ridiculed Lord Monboddo's treatise on the "origin and progress of language." Edinburgh had been growing too rapidly, the splendor of the new town had been paid for with other men's money, and a wide bankruptcy followed in which many of Hume's friends were sufferers. He himself, however, seems to have escaped without loss. He still continued to correspond with his old friends; with Adam Smith, who was living at Kirkaldy composing his "Wealth of Nations;" with Col. Edmonstone, and Baron Mure, and wrote frequently to his brother and his nephews.

But he was not allowed to enjoy his fame and honors in repose. A coarse and brutal attack from a fellow Scot exposed him once more to popular indignation. In 1770 James Beattie, professor at Aberdeen, published his "Essay on Truth." It was designed to avenge outraged Christianity, by holding up the famous skeptic anew as a proper mark for abuse and scorn. Beattie

was an indifferent poet, and no metaphysician. His superficial reasoning, and clamorous rebuke glided off from the polished armor of his antagonist and left no wound. He was wholly incapable of following Hume into the depths of those nice speculations which mark his peculiar genius; he never understood his philosophy, and never touched the point in dispute; yet the attempt made Beattie's fame. His book was received with delight by English churchmen, critics, and all Hume's enemies. It at once outstripped in popular favor the more subtle and successful answers of Campbell and Reid. Beattie received a pension of two hundred pounds for so effectually supporting Christianity, and when, soon after, he made a journey to London, was received in triumph by the highest circles of the metropolis. The king and queen invited him to an interview and complimented him on his work. Archbishops, bishops, and all the dignitaries of the church and the government hastened to do honor to the successful champion. Johnson and the Literary Club praised the "Essay" in language which showed the strength of their hostility to the skeptic; and, before Beattie left London, Sir Joshua Reynolds presented him with a portrait of himself, in the back-ground of which an angel was represented driving downwards three allegorical figures: one of which was meant for Voltaire and one for Hume.

Beattie's poem, the "Minstrel," which was published soon after, gained notoriety from the popularity of his

Essay. He rose at once to be the most famous poet in England. Goldsmith and Gray sank before his fortunate star. Posterity, however, has repaired the wrong, and both the "Minstrel" and the "Essay" have sunk into the lower ranks of literature.

Hume did not condescend to notice his feeble assailant. Yet, the success of Beattie almost justifies the contempt which he expresses for the English writers and critics. For what could be said of taste that exalted an indifferent performance to the pinnacle of fame, and had made a great poet and metaphysician of James Beattie. It is little to be wondered that Hume ceased to look for literary merit among the English, and that he afterwards received with a feeling of surprise, which he could not avoid expressing to the author, the first volume of the "Decline and Fall."

By the 23d of March, 1775, Hume began to feel the attacks of a disorder which slowly carried him from the world. He complained of a singular and excessive heat, which forced him to sleep at night under a single sheet, in the coldest weather; together with other alarming symptoms. Still, however, he did not know that he was dying; and still took an interest in the remarkable events of the time. America was just then bursting into revolt against the blind policy of the ministry. The philosopher watched the struggle with much interest. He opposed the attempt to force America into submission. "I am an American in my principles," he said, "and I wish we would let them alone to govern or mis-

govern themselves as they think proper. You will not subdue them, unless they break to pieces among themselves."

A letter to his nephew, in the end of 1775, marks his preference for republicanism, although he writes with the design of weaning David from republican principles, for which he is thought to have some inclination. Hume argues that although a commonwealth is speculatively the most perfect form of government, the English have more liberty already than is for their good.

In March, 1776, he wrote to Gibbon congratulating him upon his history. "Whether," he says, "I consider the dignity of your style, the depth of your matter, or the extensiveness of your learning, I must regard the work as equally an object of esteem, and I own that if I had not previously had the happiness of your personal acquaintance, such a performance from an Englishman, in our age, would have given me surprise." Soon after, appeared another work, the "Wealth of Nations," which was, in a measure, his own offspring. He hailed it with a cry of delight. "Euge! Belle! Dear Mr. Smith," he wrote, "I am much pleased with your performance." He had, evidently, felt anxious lest the long labors of his friend might prove to have but a narrow popularity; but no sooner had he read the work than he pronounced it certain to fix the public attention.

He had long been dying but was now become sensible of it. By the 18th of April, 1776, he had finished that

touching memorial of his own life, the most perfect of all his writings. No biography exists in any language, so simple, tasteful and refined. It was the parting testimony of his love for literature, the concentration of the passion and genius of his life.

When they knew his real condition, his friends gathered anxiously around him; his own family, together with Ferguson, Adam Smith, Blair, and others, were constantly at his side. He had made his will, leaving the bulk of his fortune to his brother, or, in case of his dying before him, to his nephew, David. He left his sister £1200, £200 to D'Alembert, and the same amount to Smith, besides various legacies and gifts. One unwelcome present he was anxious to make to Adam Smith—his *Dialogues on Natural Religion*—but Smith declined publishing them. On this point Hume was obstinate. He urged to Smith the example of Mallet, who, after publishing Bolingbroke's works, was not only unhurt by his infidelity, but received an office from the king and Lord Bute, "the most prudent men in the world." And then he jocularly promised to live long enough to print it himself. Finally, he altered this clause in his will, and directed them to be published by his nephew, David.

A journey to Bath was recommended to him, and he set out for that place, attended by John Home. They went by slow journeys. Hume conversed cheerfully with his friends, and read continually when there was no company. He ate little, but his faculties were per-

fect. He was so thin, that he was obliged always to have a cushion to sit upon. He told Home one day that he had bought a piece of ground; Home expressed his surprise that he had not heard of it before; and then Hume explained that it was in the churchyard on Calton Hill, and was meant for his burial place. He intended, he said, to have a small monument built, and that the only inscription on it should be "David Hume."

His last conversations, during this journey, abounded in literary and political anecdote. His memory seemed perfect. He ran over all the celebrated persons whom he had known, criticised the leading politicians, and related many remarkable facts. Home's journal teems with the amusing details which he heard from his dying friend. Among other things, he said "that Prior, after the accession, was reduced to such poverty by the persecution he met with, that he was obliged to publish his works by subscription. Lord Bathurst told him, that he was with Prior reading the pieces that were to be published, and he thought there was not enough to make two small volumes. He asked Prior if he had no more poems. He said, 'No more he thought good enough.' 'What is that?' said Bathurst, pointing to a roll of paper. 'A trifle,' said Prior, 'not worthy of your attention or that of the public.' Lord Bathurst desired to see it. The neglected piece was '*Alma*.'"

Bath, at first, had a good effect upon him. Sir John Pringle, the famous physician, promised him recovery, and he wrote to Blair an entertaining and hopeful letter.

Soon, however, the good symptoms disappeared. He felt that he must die. And he wrote an invitation to Blair and other friends to meet him at a last dinner, in Edinburgh, on the next fourth of July. On his return to that city, this singularly touching meeting took place.

He parted from Col. Edmonstone in tears. They knew that they were to meet no more. He wrote affectionately to his nephew, David, telling him that he could not die in satisfaction without embracing him, and promising him that he would summon him at the last. His cheerfulness was so great, that his friends could hardly believe that he was dying. Colonel Edmonstone, after their parting, wrote him a moving letter. "My dear, dear David," he said, "my heart is very full. I could not see you this morning. I thought it was better for us both. You can't die. You must live in the memory of all your friends and acquaintances, and your works will render you immortal. I could never conceive that it was possible for any one to dislike you or hate you. He must be more than savage who could be an enemy to a man of the best head and heart and of the most amiable of manners." And he then applied to him the fine verses of the able Chaulieu, lamenting his separation from his friend the Marquis de la Fare.

Hume's death-bed is one of the most memorable in history. Everything relating to it has been carefully recorded by his friends and scrutinized by his enemies. He no doubt felt that the eyes of the world and of posterity were upon him. Yet even vanity could not have

sustained him in that hour, if he had not been sincere. He was evidently a skeptic, doubting the present, doubting the future, and going down cheerfully to annihilation. Of the remarkable circumstances attending his death, the letter which he received from his friend William Strahan is the most startling. Hume had written to Strahan, telling him he was certainly dying, and bidding him an affectionate farewell. Strahan wrote back to him with expressions of warm regard, but seized the opportunity to satisfy himself upon the great point of belief: he asks Hume if he now, in the face of death, believed in annihilation, and adds that he asks this question because dying men are supposed to have glimpses of futurity. This letter was never answered.

Five days before his death, Hume wrote a parting letter to his kind friend the Countess de Boufflers, who had not long before lost her protector, the Prince of Conti. "I see death," he said, "gradually approach, without any anxiety or regret. I salute you with great affection and regard for the last time." He was now become so weak that company fatigued him. He begged Adam Smith, therefore, to leave him. He amused himself with reading and was without any pain or lowness of spirit. August 23d he wrote by his nephew's hand to Adam Smith. Three days after he was dead.

He died cheerfully and easily. He had little suffering, and seems to have gently faded away. His funeral attracted great attention in Edinburgh. A vast crowd

of friends and foes attended to witness the spectacle. It is said that a heavy rain which fell at the time did not damp the curiosity of the people, and that they expected to see the hearse either consumed by fire from heaven, or enveloped in a ray of glory. A miracle, they thought, would declare the truth or the falseness of his philosophy.

On the declivity of Calton Hill, in an ancient graveyard, stands the circular monument, built after the fashion of the old Roman tombs, that marks his resting-place. It rises conspicuous far above the streets below. It is said that the superstitious of the city have been accustomed to mark their hatred against the philosopher by defacing his tomb. At all events, there he lies on the tall hill-top, the pride and the dishonor of the stately city which he made famous. It was well that he was placed far above the common haunts and common feelings of men, for there he lived in life.

Hume left behind him his sister, brother, and two nephews. His nephew, "Josey," as he is affectionately called in the correspondence, was eccentric and somewhat dissipated. At his father's death he became Laird of Ninewells, where he lived contented and obscure. He died, unmarried, in 1832. David, the younger son, possessed of considerable talent, became more conspicuous. He was a lawyer, distinguished by every quality, the want of which had driven his uncle from the bar. He loved black-letter studies and all law books. When he wrote, his style was singularly hard and unpolished.

Not a trace of his uncle's genius softened the rude features of his mind. He was made Professor of Scot's Law in the University of Edinburgh, and became a Baron of the Scottish Exchequer. He wrote "*Commentaries on the Criminal Law of Scotland*," a work of great research and labor. His narrow and plodding intellect did well in his profession. Yet he had not sufficient genius to become eminent. And it is remarkable that Hume was unable to imbue his favorite nephew with the faintest trace of his own fine literary taste.

The historian never married: his only offspring were his works. Upon these his chief affections and his last regards were fixed. His life had passed calmly onward, amused by the never-ending toils of composition, and by the alluring variety of his philosophical speculations. One book was no sooner completed and given to the world, than another was immediately entered upon. He was never satisfied while he had no literary project in progress to fix and gratify his faculties. His works, once published, were not neglected. Like a parent over his offspring, he brooded over their fate. In support of the simile, those which were least fortunate he most regarded. Those upon which the world had frowned were those that he most lauded and admired. The unfortunate *Treatise*, the *Enquiry into the Principles of Morals*, and the least popular portions of the *History*, he cherished the more because they had been unfortunate. All through life his keen eyes were watching

everywhere the destiny of his writings. He could not endure that one of them should sink into neglect. And in that clear and truthful account of his literary life, which he wrote upon his dying bed, he carefully records the fate of each work, bestows a last word of praise upon those least popular; and declares that the narrative of his life could be little more than an account of his writings.

The chief element of Hume's mental power was its skepticism. From this sprang his novelty, strength and profuse fertility. He was born to doubt. At sixteen, if not long before, we have evidence that he had cast aside many of the prevailing modes of belief. The principle grew stronger as his intellect matured. His skepticism in metaphysics, commencing in early youth, gave rise to those novel inquiries into the mental constitution, which gave to the science of the mind a new fertility. From the doubts of Hume sprang up new schools of philosophy. He found, indeed, few followers, but he gained what pleased him almost as well—many opponents. Reid and the Scottish thinkers, driven by his subtle reasoning from the old basis of the science, called in a new ally, which they called common sense. By a single doubt, Hume created the Scottish metaphysical school. In Germany, his opponents fled to the opposite pole. Kant, after long labors, produced a theory laden with mystic technicalities, by which he believed he could refute the ingenious skeptic. He declared the mind to be self-creative, producing its own

cognitions, and while thus isolating the intellect in order to defend it from materialism, gave rise to that transcendental philosophy, which has gradually faded into the dreams of Fichte and Hegel. France, meanwhile, excited by the impulse from Germany and Scotland, sought to build up an eclectic philosophy of her own, more satisfactory to her modern thinkers than the analytical school of Des Cartes.

Such has been the power of Hume's skepticism in a single science. In politics, it has been no less destructive of ancient creeds. His essays and political discourses, so new and surprising in their day, gave a strong impulse to the study of political economy. They excited men to think upon topics which had been hitherto neglected. They aroused in England a class of reasoners who soon discovered the falseness of many of the prevailing views in trade and commercial legislation. Adam Smith developed Hume's doubts in his able treatise on the wealth of nations, and each succeeding writer upon political topics has owed much to Hume's novel inquiries. Bentham, Malthus, Brougham, and Ricardo have discussed and studied the questions which he proposed. In France, the effect of his writings was still more wonderful; they made political economy a popular study, and directed the attention of the best minds of that country to the subject of political reform. No little share of that free spirit, which led to the first Revolution, was due to the influence of Hume.

In literature, however, Hume's skepticism was

strangely silent. Here he bowed superstitiously before the oracles of ancient criticism and the borrowed taste of Paris. He could approve nothing in tragedy that was not modelled after Sophocles, or in poetry that was not a reflection of Virgil. Shakspeare was to him a wild and savage genius, and Milton barbarously sublime. Even Homer had not that charm for him which he professes. He enjoyed the smooth and easy flow of Tasso and Virgil, better than the majestic ballads that have been woven into the Iliad and Odyssey. In this spirit of deference to antiquity he always wrote. His style has nothing of that boldness with which Milton asserted his mastery over his native tongue, or with which Johnson, diving deep into the wells of English lore, drew forth the pearls of his powerful diction. Hume never doubted that the classical models were to be implicitly followed, both in style and manner. His history he formed upon the model of the Greeks, neglecting all the suggestions which the enlarged inquiries of modern times demanded. He recommended Robertson to write biographies after the manner of Plutarch, and would himself have sunk into a mere imitator of Thucydides, had not his earnest doubts in religion, politics and character lent an interest to the history, which animates its classic style with vital fire, and gives it a novelty which no classic has attained.

From this singular exception to his general skepticism, Hume's criticisms are valueless. His literary history is without a novel thought. You anticipate his judgment

before it is uttered. You see whom he will condemn and where will be the fatal fault. He mows down the fairest flowers in the gardens of English poetry with a hand more relentless than that of time. He aims vain blows at the greatest English dramatist, and the lord of English poets. Bacon, he ranks below Galileo, and Spenser, imaginative and harmonious, for him had written in vain. On the whole, he had little respect for English literature, and looked rather to Scotland, with its Wilkie and Home, to redeem the nation from the reproach of deficiency in taste and genius.

In another field of thought his skepticism was unusually active, and was again the ruling principle of his intellect. Religion to him had no existence; and his doubt of religion has stirred the mind of the world. "God, immortality, and liberty," the ideas which Kant makes the necessary offspring of mentality, Hume argued against as non-existent. His doubt, inconclusive as it was, proved the source of much that is peculiar and powerful in his writings. From the publication of the *Treatise*, his whole series of productions owe their interest to the artful ingenuity, with which his want of faith is developed and defended. History, essay, and metaphysical inquiry, all echo with the startling cry, "There is no God!" and the chief aim of his powerful intellect is to enforce this dreadful proposition—"Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." These infidelities were not new in themselves, but by the manner in which Hume discovered and defended them. He

drew them out of the deeps of metaphysical inquiry, and so arranged and adorned them in his novel speculations, that they were made singularly startling to the age in which he lived.

A skeptic by necessity, Hume fortunately possessed other mental traits which kept him from the sluggishness of doubt: he was untiringly inquisitive. In all subjects for which he was fitted by nature, he labored for knowledge. It is told of him that in company he would sit leaning on his hand, and lifting his eyes only to ask a question. This trait pursued him in his studies. In morals, metaphysics, and politics he was constantly an inquirer. Yet he seldom ventured a conclusion. His power lay in asking suggestively. Whenever he dogmatizes, as in literary criticism, he is usually wanting in novelty and truth.

Skepticism implies a want of the imaginative power. The skeptic may invent ingenious systems of argument, and delight in intellectual exercises; but he can know nothing of that fertility of form and imagery which springs from the influence of faith. Poets and painters are never skeptical. And Hume, believing as little as possible, destroyed whatever fancy had lingered to him from his youth. In his essays he emulates the gay and fanciful manner of Addison in vain, and Addison must have smiled at his uncourtly imitator. In history he carefully avoids all scenic display. His characters are well known intellectually; but never in their common dress and every-day pursuits. We almost forget that

Queen Elizabeth wore a ruff; or that Mary's court shone with beautiful women, and glittered with Parisian fashions. He paints no stately pageants, nor lingers over the manners and amusements of the times. No opening diorama unfolds to us the men who sat in the Long Parliament, nor do we see the countenance and bearing of the daring Oliver, or the brave Montrose. To Hume, victim or victor were only portions of an interesting political discussion. He would have them animated arguments: he paints with clearness the outlines of their mental character, and leads Charles I. to the scaffold in a manner that touches every heart. But in all this, imagination has little share. He wanted wholly the creative power, and his characters live in the thoughts of the reader not as individuals, but as parts of an ingenious argument.

Yet Hume was not insensible to the finer feelings. The most captivating trait in his historical style is the readiness with which he seizes upon the tender and affecting elements of his narrative. While pursuing the cold and common details of political life, he constantly surprises us by an appeal to the softer sentiments of our nature, and is always successful in calling forth the emotion which he wishes to excite. His account of the last days of Elizabeth, of the execution of King Charles, of the death of the beautiful Mary, and the virtuous Russell, is singularly moving; and excels anything that can be found in his classic models.

Knowing his own powers, Hume aimed at nothing

which he could not reach. In early youth he perhaps believed that he might write a poem after the manner of Virgil, cold, polished, and imitative; but as no trace of his early poetry remains, he must have prudently destroyed all his early attempts; and soon ceased to think himself a poet. His later efforts in verse, if those attributed to him are his, were mere literary recreations. He was vain of his poor attempts at humor; but these were only the trifles of the moment. He soon discovered that he was to be a philosopher and a prose writer, and with this design, gave himself up to reflection, looking in upon the movements of his own mind.

In style, he knew but one standard of excellence, and that he constantly strove to attain. We have seen the eagerness with which he strove to banish Scotticisms; he labored all his life to improve his style, and he made it more perfect than that of any other historian. It is faultless. Gibbon, Robertson, and their successors, have each some peculiar fault, which, amid their many excellences, leaves dissatisfaction upon the mind. But no man can rise from the study of Hume's writings, without feeling that language was never more delicately moulded or thought more artlessly expressed.

His style has an endless rhythm like the verse of Shakspeare, and never fails in harmony. Melody, the offspring of true genius, is unattainable by common minds. It was the charm of the Greek historians and has descended to a few modern writers. Hume's rhythm is peculiar to himself. It differs from that of Robertson

or Gibbon, and the latter declared that he listened to it in despair. It has no resemblance to the sounding periods of Jeremy Taylor, or the simpler flow of Addison. Hume's ear for harmony was perfect, and his great thoughts shaped themselves into delicate modulations of language as naturally as those of Homer compressed themselves in verse.

To preserve this harmony he uses an easy flow of words. He never condenses; his thoughts are all broadly presented to the reader. There is no trace of the study of the elder English writers in his prose, and to him they were, probably, all barbarians. He had read little of Taylor, Barrow, or Burton. His thoughts never rise into artificial periods like those of Johnson, or contract into concise novelty like those of Bacon. He sought rather to utter his peculiar views in a language almost conversational, and distinguished from conversation only by its pleasing modulations. He uses the plainest Saxon; but he does this not from any acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon literature, but because he found that language the best to express his meaning. He has plainly studied the French writers diligently, but he has carefully shunned the measured and stilted tone assumed by the writers under Louis XIV. He has none of the declamation, the repetitions, the contrasts and antithesis that mark the eloquence of Massillon and Bossuet; he has even less of Voltaire's flippancy and satire; and his style is simply that of a wise and thought-

ful mind addressing minds as thoughtful and as earnest as itself.

To attain this purity of style he was forced to labor incessantly. His handwriting was clear, yet even his familiar letters were made obscure by his efforts to remove all defects. It will be remembered, that he wrote a long letter to Dr. Clephane, asking him if the word "enow" was in use in good company in London. In reviewing Dr. Reid's manuscript, the only defect that he notices is the misuse of a single word. One of his last letters to Dr. Robertson contains a half-serious remonstrance against the "old-fashioned, dangling word '*wherewith*,' and the tribe of whereupon, whereto, and wherein." And as he went over his History, in preparing new editions, we find him constantly exercising this delicate verbal criticism. His various editions show the progress and growing nicety of his taste. In the first edition he writes "Scotch," in the new one "Scottish." Betwixt becomes "between," "under pretext" is "on pretence," "confined in the Tower"—"confined to the Tower," "effectuate a marriage"—"effect a marriage." "Had sat" the hardly more pleasing "had sitten," "reduced to shifts" becomes the less vulgar "reduced to extremities," and in the sentence "his dignity was exempted from pride," the Latin Scotticism is made "his dignity was free from pride."

Such careful word-study was enforced upon Hume and his literary circle by their Scottish origin. Speaking

the broad dialect of their country, it is the more wonderful that Smith and Robertson and Hume should have so fully succeeded in attaining an almost perfect English. For this purpose, Robertson gave his days and nights to the study of Swift, and Hume, perhaps, to Addison. Yet they still labored under the disadvantage of writing, as it were, in a foreign language, and wanting the freedom and perfect mastery which only early habit can give, were forced to become classics in order to write with any ease.

Hume was not an eminently learned man. He was never fond of gathering the thoughts of other men in his common-place book, or of fixing them in his memory. His mind, unlike the intellects of Warburton or Gibbon, those vast storehouses of knowledge, was occupied chiefly with looking in upon itself. He read few books, but those carefully and often. He always said that there were but few books worth reading. But upon small materials of research and study, he delighted to weave the vast fabrics of his own speculations. His mind, producing abundantly from its native strength, seemed to require little renewal to enable it to maintain its fertility.

Among his Scottish contemporaries, however, Hume passed for learned. By the side of Robertson or Kames, Smith and Reid, he was no doubt widely read. His friends, even more than himself, depended chiefly upon the native fertility of their minds. And in fact, of the two national intellects, the Scottish seems best fitted for

speculation, the English for collecting knowledge. By the side of Johnson, Gibbon, or Gray, Hume's learning was dwarfed and feeble. His acquaintance with the languages was very imperfect. Even in Latin he was plainly deficient; and for its prosody he had no ear. His quotations of the Latin poets from memory, are usually deficient in grammar and always in verse. He may have read Latin easily, but he made errors in writing it that would have disgraced a schoolboy. Greek he professes to have "recovered," after he was thirty, but he makes such miserable mistakes in quoting it that it is not likely he could ever have read it with ease. French he spoke tolerably, was afraid to write, and perhaps had read extensively. It could hardly have happened that he should have spent three years of his youth in France without at least being able to understand the niceties of the language. Machiavelli and Tasso he professes to have read in their native tongue; certainly he had nothing else. He evidently had no readiness in acquiring languages, and must have been indebted chiefly to translations for his knowledge of the Greek masters who were his models in poetry, and the historians whom he imitated in prose.

With science, art, and mechanics he was wholly unfamiliar. No traces of geographical knowledge is to be found in his history. But the most striking instance of his ignorance is to be found in the two unfortunate first volumes of that work. Hume has written of the days of Alfred and Edward the Confessor, of the manners and

genius of the Anglo Saxon race, without any attempt to understand the true spirit of that remarkable people. To their poetical and prose compositions, their men of wonderful learning, and their intelligent and noble hearted monarchs he was wholly a stranger. Of the formation of the English language he knew nothing. He believed it to consist for the most part of French derivatives, an error that the analyzation of a few sentences must have instantly revealed. "From this," he writes, "proceeded that mixture of French which is at present to be found in the English tongue, and which composes the greatest and best part of our language," a statement altogether unfounded. The English language far from being chiefly Norman French, is chiefly pure Saxon, and derives its excellence from that circumstance. In its composition the Celtic and Danish have as large a share, the Latin a far more important one, than the language of its conquerors. The attempt of the victorious Normans to introduce the French into the schools and the literature of England, was unsuccessful, and the language of the conquered people gradually became that of the victors.*

Of the Anglo Saxons themselves he is no better informed. He classes them together as a people "rude and uncultivated, ignorant of letters, ungovernable and addicted to riot and disorder." As compared with the Normans they were barbarians, and from the Normans

* See Rask, *Anglo-Sax. Gram. and the Eng. Lang.* by R. G. Latham. Sharon Turner is also full upon all points of language and antiquities.

they received the first impulse towards knowledge and civilization. And this is told of a people who had already made great progress in learning and letters, who had produced learned historians, pleasing poets, and princes distinguished by a love of literature, a wisdom, and a political liberality such as no Norman duke had ever been known to display. A people whose monasteries produced scholars educated under Bede, and Egbert and Alfred, and whose famous Alcuin was the founder of the University of Paris, and had imparted the first elements of civilization to the subjects of Charlemagne.

But ignorance might have been pardoned if Hume had not added a graver fault. The ideal of a perfect historian is one who shall labor for truthfulness; a philosophical historian, one would suppose, of all others must display this peculiar trait. He should be the most careful and accurate of writers. But far different is it with Hume. He evidently commenced his History as an agreeable mental exercise. He selected an interesting hero. It was Charles I. Whether from the mere love of paradox or from a lingering taint of Jacobitism which was in his family, he resolved to lend all the influence of his subtile reasoning, and pathetic narrative, to the side of the tyrannical monarch. Charles was to rise from his grave arrayed in the white robes of a martyr. To clothe in this garb of purity a monarch who had attempted to rule his people without a parliament, and to take their money from them at pleasure; who had frequently violated his pledged word and had acted upon

the maxim that kings should keep no faith with their subjects, was not easy. Yet Hume essayed and accomplished it. But he did this by violating the truth of history. He invented indeed, no new facts, but he accomplished his design by omitting much that was important. He passed lightly over the faults of Charles to dwell upon his virtues. He blinds himself and his readers to the great qualities of those heroes of the middle classes who asserted the liberties of Englishmen, Hampden and Pym, Waller and Cromwell. The Parliament he represents as factious and designing, the king as grave, beneficent and ill-used. That vast body of Englishmen who had risen in arms against oppression, he depicts as little better than a factious mob. That austere army, which gave to war a higher aspect and robbed it of half its brutality, to Hume was composed of canting hypocrites, and that mighty genius who, on the death of Charles, ruled England with more than the energy of Elizabeth, was only a whining brewer who could not speak two words consecutively with clearness, and whose life and example of rigid virtue was all hypocrisy and guile.

This false representation was met by a public reprobation. Yet Hume clung to his theory. All the remaining volumes of his work bear upon the character of his hero, Charles. He wrote the history of the Tudors to prove that Charles was justifiable in tyranny, and he pursues the theme back to the Conquest. Wherever he can extend the prerogative, he has done so;

wherever he could set out of view the rights of the people, he has seized the opportunity. For the Parliament he has everywhere a sneer, for the prince a word of applause: a course the more inexcusable, since in his political essays he had unfolded a liberality of political sentiment that would have graced a Hampden or a Milton.

Hume's History, therefore, is scarcely better than a fiction. It is hardly more reliable than the works of Carte or Oldmixon; and far less excusable, since it pretends to philosophic impartiality. A witness on the stand, who should give such an account of facts with which he was familiar, omitting those that made against his purpose, and dwelling on those that favored it, would be guilty of a suppression of the truth, and would violate his oath. An historian, pretending to impartiality, who thus distorts the truth, is guilty of the greatest offence. He is telling to posterity a tale that he knows to be false.

The only excuse for Hume is that he took a low view of the morals of history. He seems to have thought that the first duty of an historian was to relate an interesting story. If he carefully labored his style, and collected amusing details from various sources, if he could produce an authority for every circumstance, and could tell Charles Townsend, who doubted his accuracy, that he would find every incident in the records: he believed his duty was fulfilled. He had written a work interesting, full of ingenious theories and happy specu-

lations, teeming with the evidences of taste and genius; and what more could posterity ask?

Is it possible that this false pleader, this avowed traducer, this narrator of a garbled story, can be the first of British historians? That a writer so unreliable can have won the attention and the applause of the best minds of his own and all succeeding ages? That Mackintosh and Brougham and Romilly can have united to place him where he now stands, first among his rivals; while the honest intellect of the Anglo-Saxons of every land cherishes as a priceless treasure this work, in which there is so much that is false and so much that is unworthy?

There can only be applied to this singular problem in literature the simplest solution. What we admire in Hume's History is the display of intellectual power. We read it, not so much for information, as for an agreeable intellectual exercise. In this view it was written, in this it is read. We admire its subtile disputations, its artful array of facts, the genius which shines in its false narrative, and illuminates its unsound disputations. The consciousness that its narrative is unsound heightens the interest of the tale. We yield to the skillful partisan as the spectator yields to the gifted tragedian. Its scenes of pathos fascinate us, although we feel that our pity is wrongly bestowed. Its nice balance of opposing arguments, with a bias ever to one side, satisfies our judgment as a specimen of peculiar mental power. It is the skillful by-play of the barrister

defending an almost defenceless cause solely by his own ingenuity ; and we rank Hume the first of historians, not because he has written a truthful narrative, but because he has shown what an admirable book he would have made, had he taken up a better cause.

One trait which modern historians claim as their peculiar excellence was first adopted by Hume. He was inquisitive with regard to all matters of political economy. In his essays he had been accustomed to examine into curious statistics, and now he was the first of the English historians who added to his history an account of the manners of the times of which he wrote. The appendix which he attached to each important period was not only a new feature, but must have been attended with considerable labor and research. He here descends from the dignity of history to give minute details of common life ; to tell how much a capon sold for under Henry VIII. ; how much corn brought in the reign of Elizabeth ; what was the price of land, the wages of labor, the cost of transportation, the gross amount of commerce and trade. He also notices slightly the amusements and tastes of the people, the employments of the court and city, and tells something of the condition of the masses in regard to food and living. Invariably he closes his account of manners with those criticisms upon literature so well meant, but so ill done, and which, valueless in themselves, betray the strength of his national prejudices and the narrow range of his taste.

For scenery and nature he had little love. In all his writings there is not a single description of a scene from nature. His journal down the Rhine and the Danube may seem an exception to this; but the faint praise and general account which he gives of the finest landscapes in Europe, shows how slight was the impression with which they affected him. He simply remarks that the banks of this river are wild, of that are well cultivated; but he never pauses to select some particular view, and to reproduce it to the fancy of the reader. Drachenfels and Ehrenbreitstein are to him only common castles: he is more struck by the deformities of the peasants of Styria than delighted with the wild and lovely landscape through which he travelled. It is always the curious traits of every scene rather than the beautiful, upon which he delights to dwell. For strange and novel facts he is ever on the watch: but for mere beauty he has no leisure.

This want of perception of physical beauty is felt in his history. Writing of a country of great natural charms, he might well have paused in his details of politics, to rescue some single landscape from neglect, to paint a battle-field or to describe the physical advance of his country. He might have defined the landscape amid which Mary passed her long imprisonment, and upon which her sad eyes so often rested in hope of deliverance; or he might have drawn, with his master hand, the fine scenery amid which Falkland fell. But of nature he gives us not a glimpse. Even in his appendix he aims to give

no general view of the condition of the country, whether it was covered with cottages, or studded only with gloomy castles ; where cornfields smiled, or where the ravages of war or the barrenness of the soil enforced a perpetual sterility. Such descriptions he did not think worthy of a place in history, nor is it probable that had he attempted it, he could have given a much better account of a fine landscape, than he could of a fine poem or a fine play.

Great intellects are of necessity refined. There is a common standard to which they all aspire. Hume was right, therefore, in endeavoring by ceaseless labor to cast off his faults of education, to refine and chasten his genius, and to approach as near as possible to his highest standard—the ancients. To become a classic was his constant aim ; and if that term mean an union of the greatest mental power with the highest limit of refinement, he succeeded. Fortunately for his fame, he did not lose his originality in his effort to approach his great models. Each one of his writings is marked by a novelty which separates it from all other productions, and gives it a striking individuality. The Treatise, polished and pruned by his youthful taste, still possesses more rude strength than any of his works. But the History never grows tame or feeble, however much he labors to remove its superfluities, and to conform it to a classical design. His style, delicately wrought and purified, was entirely his own. His method and arrangement, clear, simple and philosophical, no other writer has since been

able to rival. And it is the highest proof of the originality of his genius that, although always studying and imitating high models, in all his writings he shows no trace of imitation.

As an historian Hume takes the chief place in the literature of his country. There he has been placed not only by the ablest critics but by the common agreement of all reading men. And it is doubtful whether, since the age of Tacitus, there has arisen in all modern literature an historical writer who has combined so many remarkable traits. Niebuhr, if he be more than an historical critic, is far more learned. Guicciardini more patriotic, and Voltaire more acute; but Hume is more thoroughly than either the great historian. He seems to have had a fitness for this vocation more than any other man. And all his faculties, conspiring happily together, blend in his great work the highest excellences of historical composition.

In essay writing he was less happy. His shorter pieces are wonderful for method and order. If argumentative, they conduct the mind to their conclusion without a shade of obscurity or a needless pause. If more fanciful, they are always clear and refined. But they are not essays in the true sense of that word; they are not the genuine descendants of the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*; they want the lively play of fancy, the wide range of illustration, and the happy flow of style that mark the true offspring of the great British essayists. For illustration Hume was wholly at a loss. He knew

nothing of nature and of the thousand images and pleasant conceptions, which she offers to the imaginative mind. From poetry he could borrow no beauties, since he was altogether incapable of perceiving what was its crowning charm; association and romantic legends and curious lore, he had no taste for; pleasant fancies and inventions he had no power to summon to his aid. His style was bare and and unenriched from the abundant stores which lie at the call of the genial essayist, like Lamb or Macaulay, but which were to him all sealed and unknown. His language had no richness of expression, no powerful and impetuous flow. His essays, therefore, are simply disquisitions; as arguments they are admirable, as examples of subtle reasoning they have a singular charm. But it is impossible to call Hume an essayist, as Addison was an essayist, or to rank him among that delightful band of writers, peculiar to England, who have done more than any other class for the improvement and embellishment of their native literature.

As a metaphysical author he stands again, in novelty of conception and in greatness of influence, at the summit of renown. Locke and Berkeley have both sunk into provincials before his world-wide fame. Reid and Stewart are by reaction his disciples. Yet Hume fails wholly in method in treating of metaphysics. His first work, the *Treatise*, was an incongruous medley. Professing to treat of the human understanding, its second part ran into moral disquisitions, and its third was of

“virtue and vice.” He seems to have flung to the press a mass of discursive thoughts under a title altogether inappropriate. From this fault he never recovered and never ceased to lament it. His style, however, made amends for his want of method. He conveys the most difficult conceptions in the plainest language. Later writers have been driven to the formation of technical phrases to convey their metaphysical meaning. Kant has formed a vocabulary of the science, the meaning of which his disciples labor in vain to unfold; and his method has been adopted by most modern metaphysicians with, perhaps, some benefit. But Hume never felt this necessity. Novel as were his theories, he could unfold them with perfect clearness in the common dialect. He never veils himself in a wise obscurity, or uses sounding words to which none but himself can attach a meaning. His own conceptions were singularly clear and well defined, and his style was so pure that it revealed the depths of his intellect to the common observer, as the clear water of an inland lake its pebbly bottom.

Hume is next to be examined as a man. In his home and among the circle of his acquaintances, his kindly nature and cheerful disposition won universal affection. His intimate friends loved and esteemed him with unusual warmth. They spoke of his character as inimitable. No man was so wise, so just, so beneficent, and so mild, as David Hume. So pure were his morals, and so simple and unaffected his conduct, that the austere clergy of Scotland courted his society and profited by

his example. Had a shade of doubt rested upon his moral purity, Robertson, Blair, and Ferguson would scarcely have ventured to form an intimate connection with the active skeptic. In his "own life," Hume, with some self-applause, relates his own virtues. He tells us that he was a man of gentle disposition, of social, cheerful temper, placable, moderate, and sincere; that he enjoyed society and was everywhere welcome for his good humor, particularly among the fair. That, although he exposed himself to the rage of civil and religious factions, he was never assailed by the voice of calumny, and that his friends had never occasion to vindicate any one point in his character. To this praise, Adam Smith, just parted from the dying philosopher, adds his affectionate laudation. To him, Hume appeared to rise above human nature; his temper was more happily balanced than that of any other man; his charity, even in the midst of his rigid frugality, never ceased to flow; the gentleness of his disposition never weakened the force of his genius; his gaiety of temper was attended with the most severe application; his pleasant raillery was never tinged with bitterness, the source of other men's wit; and, in Adam Smith's opinion, he seemed to have approached, both in his life and death, as near the limit of human perfection as ever man had done or could do.

Another delightful tribute to the dignity of Hume's character is in existence—the story of La Roche. In this moral lesson, one of the most agreeable in the

language, Hume is the hero. The amiable author, Mackenzie, has painted him as he appeared to his contemporaries. He is an object of reverence, affection, and delight; so simple that he can stoop to the pleasures of a village maiden, so powerful that he can grasp the grandest conceptions of philosophy. The intellectual village pastor, La Roche, is struck by his exceeding excellence; he has all of the Christian but the creed; his benevolence is easily touched; his moral purity spotless; his temper so sweet and even that it has in it something divine. To all this excellence La Roche would add the crowning charm of faith, and by his daughter's grave seeks to allure the skeptic to a trust in a future world. Hume, it is said, remembered ever after, with softened feelings, the touching scene, and the half-uttered remonstrance of his simple friend.

But from this blaze of panegyric something must be taken away. His letters show that his temper was not always mild. He hated with a steadiness that would have gratified Johnson. Provoked by the cold reception of his works in England, he never forgave the offence. Not a friend, except Lord Hertford and his family, did he ever select from the English. Seldom could he speak of them with patience. The strong expressions in his letters were no doubt partly jocular; but there was real dislike in the manner in which he wrote of London to Helvetius, and in the coldness with which he turned from the society of English authors

when, as under secretary, and a man of wealth and station, he was moving in the highest circles.

Slight provocations often broke his friendships. The letter which he wrote to Blair on the subject of theological conversation, was not in good temper, and would have alienated many another friend. From Oswald he was parted by an imprudent jest: he was so alienated from his early friend, Lord Kames, that he wrote of him in a tone of ridicule, and was never reconciled. With Mure he was very near a separation; and with Lord Elibank he quarrelled about the character of Queen Mary. Fortunately they afterwards renewed their long and tender regard.

Cheerful he may have been by nature, yet the tone of his correspondence is desponding. Of literary fame, the darling object of his thoughts, he is almost hopeless. He laments to Blair, Robertson, and Home that fashion and enmity have conspired to destroy his reputation. He was never satisfied with the sale of his works, even when his bookseller was surprised at their success. He lamented to the end of his life the fate of the unlucky Treatise. By his account it fell dead-born from the press, although it was noticed not unfavorably in a leading review, and a new edition was soon after called for. He relates, with equal exaggeration, the fate of the earlier volumes of his History. Notwithstanding a large edition sold at once in Edinburgh, and although the work gradually made its way in London, Hume

imagined that his countrymen had united to destroy his fame. In his disappointment he would have abandoned for ever his ungrateful country, have changed his name, and buried himself in a safe obscurity. This thought of a conspiracy to destroy his fame haunted him all his life, and in his last journey to Bath, he mentioned it again to John Home.

His expectations in literature were exorbitant: he demanded from the public unanimous applause. Sceptic, Jacobite, and partial writer as he was, he professed that he hoped to please all parties. Many he did please. From the beginning, his friends, of whom he had many, encouraged him with high commendations. His books, chiefly upon abstruse subjects, sold well, and almost any other author of the day would have been satisfied with that success which he regarded as equal to a defeat. It is hard to reconcile this constant strain of complaint with that cheerfulness of temperament which he professed to possess, which always looked upon the bright side of things.

Hume's vanity was one of his ruling impulses. He courted the notice of the world sedulously, and when he had gained it, never forgot that its eye was upon him. He was pleased with attention and pined with neglect. Hence the lamentations which he pours over his writings, and the large demand of applause he makes upon his countrymen. Whoever offended his vanity, shocked and outraged his nature. For this he hated the English critics, and the whole nation, to his dying day. For

this he called the whigs "villains," because they had been the loudest in decrying his History. A secret vanity of meriting the world's applause may have aided him in preserving, under all circumstances, his self-complacency, and of studiously cherishing his moral purity; but if it led to such results, it certainly was a vanity most commendable.

Graver deficiencies deface his character, and place him far below the Christian standard of human excellence. His love of fame, his ruling passion, was a low and unworthy emotion. Fame he sought chiefly for itself. He wanted to be lauded and decried, to be passed from mouth to mouth, to be confessed a genius. But he seems never to have inquired what would be the effect of his writings upon morals and human happiness. He shrank from that alarming question. Instead of using his fame as an instrument of good, he made it only a source of egotistical enjoyment. He watched its slow rise, and gradual prevalence, and tasted the full cup with the selfish joy of an epicure. He pursued it with long labors, he snatched it with avidity. But it was the idle shadow that he sought, and not the instrument of highest good.

Was Hume a lover of truth? Appearances seem against him. His writings are inconsistent and insincere. His history condemns his essays, his letters reveal some threatening facts. A young gentleman who held skeptical opinions, desired Hume's advice whether he should enter the church, and profess to believe and to teach

that religion which he secretly despised. Hume told him that he was no more bound to keep faith with Christians, than with children, or madmen; he would evidently have his disciples take vows which they must violate in every thought; and treat the faith of the Christians as Cicero treated that of paganism. This defective morality he defended on the ground of expediency. Religion was a necessary engine of the state, and therefore philosophers might profess to believe for the good of the state. Hume even regrets, in this unfortunate letter, that he had not himself more concealed his own skeptical sentiments from the public.

Hume asserts that his friends had never occasion to vindicate any one point in his character; he forgot his quarrel with Rousseau. His conduct in the publication of his pamphlet on that occasion, was severely blamed as well as strongly defended. He had received, it was generally allowed, great provocation, and his anger was pardonable if not philosophic. But it was too violent. He had been warned by the Parisians of the unsettled temper of his friend; he had discovered that if not mad he was suspicious, petulant and thoughtless to excess; he knew that he was unhappy. It was a want of magnanimity therefore in Hume to pursue with severity his ungrateful companion. But his vanity had been wounded. And he consoled himself by publishing to the world his own beneficence and Rousseau's malignity.

Yet from these blemishes, Hume's character arises to

the highest excellence that can be attained without the aid of religious impulses. No man's life has ever been exposed to more unfriendly scrutiny, and few have betrayed less defects. From early youth he worshipped philosophical virtue. He proposed to govern his passions by the rules of Socrates, and to discover happiness in a rigid self restraint. This principle he never abandoned. Among the dissipated throngs of Paris he was as rigid and as self denying as he had been in the retirement of Ninewells. His rise in wealth and station had no effect upon his morals, and though unhappily too tolerant of the failings of others, he was never so of his own.

His purity shed credit upon authorship. The writers of the day were far from austere; they were familiar with the jail, the tavern, the theatre, and low haunts of dissipation. Savage, Smollett, Fielding, Goldsmith, and even Burke and Johnson in their youth, by their morals, did no honor to letters. But the whole career of Hume was without a stain. And with pardonable vanity and good humored satisfaction, he would often jest with his friends upon his own good morals and bad reputation.

His virtues were active. He labored to oblige his friends with a steady patience that was never surpassed. He was always kind to his relatives, and possessed their warm regard. His generosity towards rising authors was never weary; his exertions to serve Blacklock, Wilkie, Home, and Smollett, and almost every other

writer of his own country, were given with a frank good feeling that made him generally beloved.

It is natural to inquire whether Hume found happiness in the path in which he had resolved to pursue it ; whether by the control which he had early gained over his will, temper, and desires, he in fact obtained a principle that could shield him against the evils of life, and make existence a tranquil and a satisfactory thing.

His conscience could have given him little trouble : he had lived blamelessly. Having considered the chances of fortune, he was prepared to encounter its frowns with composure. He could be cheerful at moments when other men must have suffered deeply, and could discover pleasure when other men would have found only pain. In his love of literature he possessed a taste which no misfortune prevented him from gratifying ; and his hope of future fame was an object that might well arouse and employ all his faculties. When weary of men, he could return to his never-failing books ; when, sated with reading, he could take up his ready pen ; and if composition ceased to amuse, he could call around him a pleasing self-complacency which left no room for repining, and banished unpleasant regret. He liked solitude, he enjoyed company, and his happy temperament yielded him pleasure in every change.

Yet Hume's philosophy was never fairly tried. His lot in life was fortunate compared with that of the majority of his race. It opened with health, compe-

tence, an easy disposition, and the friendship and esteem of many : it closed amid wealth, fame, and the gratification of his highest desires. He had borne off the prizes of life, had gratified his peculiar tastes, and succeeded in his most cherished designs ; and might well profess that he was satisfied.

A different fate would have better tested his theories. Had he been of the number of those who live only to suffer ; whose wants are never satisfied ; whom poverty and disappointment press down beneath the scorn of their fellows : had he, like Goldsmith, been plunged in overwhelming debt ; or, like Johnson and Smollett, been burdened with a disordered and melancholy mind, he would hardly have looked back from his death-bed upon his past existence with satisfaction, except as the pathway to another.

But Hume, too, had his future life. A great hope sustained him from youth to age, and bore him peacefully to the grave. With the sages of old, for whose counsels he had bartered revelation, he looked onward to the applause of posterity. Life was not enough for him ; there was something beyond it even to the skeptic. Present triumphs could not satisfy his ambition ; one existence was too narrow for his spirit. And what chiefly gave continuity and consistency to his life was the steadiness with which he bent all his faculties, from the beginning to the close of being, to press onward.

His hope was literary immortality. This was the only future life to which he aspired. Across the grave

he saw no alluring visions beckoning him to the unknown world. The hope of the pagan, the Christian, the Mahometan, was not his: visions of Elysium, of an ever-blooming Paradise, of golden cities, and of an endless reign of bliss amid celestial natures and glorified men, never came to gladden his unimpassioned nature. He felt no instinct impelling his spirit forward into a new existence. Eminent as he was above other men in life, he was willing to sink at last to a level with the humblest.

For himself, he would die. He cared nothing for his individual fate: he would rather meet annihilation than uncertainty. But on his death-bed his works were his constant care: his thoughts ran wholly upon their fate with posterity: his last hours were cheered by symptoms of his fame breaking out with new lustre: his fame, his only after-life, was his last concern: his motley fame, made up of the reproaches, the scorn, the hatred, the wonder, and the delight of all future ages, was enough for him. So that men should never forget to revile, to praise, to admire, and to remember him, he could be content. The one great evil that he feared at death was oblivion; when assured that he could never be forgotten, he was happy: and so, in the hope of literary immortality, he died.

Happier had he lived and died like Lyttleton, with a blessing for all around him, and himself doubly blessed in the hope of a higher immortality.

RAPIN DE THOYRAS.

THE History of England, by Rapin, has become, in a measure, a part of the literature of that country. And, although he wrote in a foreign language, he was long considered the best historian of England. He was descended from an ancient Protestant family of France, long renowned among the early reformers. His great grandfather, Philibert de Rapin, was beheaded by the Catholics, in 1568. Peter de Rapin, his grandfather, Baron of Mauvers, was governor of one of the towns in Guienne, delivered up to the Huguenots as pledges for their security.

The historian was born at Castres, in Languedoc, 25th March, 1661. His family still continued leaders of the Protestant party, and his eldest brother was Governor of Montauban. Rapin at first studied law, but as the troubles of the reformers increased, he wished to enter the army, and was only withheld from his military scheme by the advice of his father.

In 1685, his father dying and the Edict of Nantes being revoked, he went to England, and in London was

introduced to Barillon, the French ambassador, and was offered a presentation to the king. But Rapin declined these civilities of the Catholics, which he thought were designed to win him from his faith, and having passed over into Holland, entered a company of French volunteers, of which his cousin, a Rapin, was in command.

In the war of 1689, he was made ensign in an English regiment. He fought in Ireland under William III., and was wounded at the taking of Limerick. Soon after, he received a captain's commission.

Whether led by his taste for study or by some disgust in the service, Rapin, in 1693, abandoned the army, and, it is said, at the command of the king, became tutor to the son of the Earl of Portland. He resigned his commission to his younger brother, who afterwards rose to a lieutenant colonelcy in the British dragoons.

Rapin received a pension of £100 on leaving the army, with probably a good revenue from his office. He married in 1699, but continued his travels and went with his young lord to Italy.

In 1707, however, he withdrew from the world, and having retired to Wesel, in the Duchy of Cleves, passed the rest of his life in composing his *History of England*. He died of hard study, in May, 1725, leaving a son and six daughters.

He is said to have been of a serious disposition, fond of music, and well skilled in many languages. He knew French, Italian, Latin, Greek, and Spanish, and had read much in the literature of every country. His

mind was of a speculative character, fond of reasoning and general inquiry. As an historian, he was careful and laborious, pursuing his great theme with ardor, and omitting no researches that could serve to illustrate it.

The History begins with a clear exposition of the leading principles of the English constitution, of which Rapin seems to have been an ardent admirer. He then describes the shape, size, and nature of the British Isle; relates the fable of Brutus, the grandson of Eneas, and paints the early Britons, tall, well-formed, and savage, living in huts of turf, skins, or boughs, and hiding in the shades of impenetrable forests.

Eight volumes, quarto, of the History were published during the author's lifetime, bringing the narrative down to the death of Charles I., and two more were added in 1724. A translation was made by Tindal, with a continuation to 1760.

It is impossible to read Rapin's clear and laborious narrative, without admiring the patience and ardor with which he has studied the annals of a foreign country, and became imbued with the spirit of its people and its institutions. A sincere lover of freedom and a reformer in religion, Rapin found here a congenial subject, and wrote with untiring interest of a people, who so perfectly represented his own political and religious principles. His History, with the exception of that of Hume, is still the best account we have of England; and, although Rapin was neither a philosopher nor a fine writer, he perfectly mastered his subject, and has given a clear and

interesting account of England, under the Saxons, the Normans, and in later ages. Hume has borrowed liberally from him, particularly in his earlier volumes, and probably no writer upon English history will ever make any progress without deriving considerable aid from Rapin.

CATHERINE MACAULAY.

MRS. MACAULAY, as an historian, is placed by Horace Walpole very nearly on a level with Robertson, and far beyond the partial and unreliable Hume. She was certainly a woman of remarkable intelligence; enthusiastic, well read, laborious, and sincere in her passion for freedom. In her own age she found many admirers. She corresponded with Washington, and knew most of her eminent contemporaries; and such was the ardor of admiration she inspired, that the rector of Walbrook, Dr. Wilson, set up her statue in the chancel of his church, and could never be prevailed upon to remove it.

She was the daughter of John Sawbridge, Esq., of Ollantigh, in Kent, and in 1760 she married Dr. George Macaulay, a physician of some talent and reputation. On his death she married a second time, 1778, the Rev. Mr. Graham.

Her numerous works show the ardor with which she pursued her literary labors. She wrote a History of England from the reign of James I. to the Accession, in which she supports her liberal views by a violent attack

upon the Stuarts. With no delicacy of taste or novelty of manner, this work could only have gained reputation as a severe and unreliable partisan history. It is evidently, however, the production of a person of considerable reflection, of great ardor and sincerity, and of a warm and enthusiastic temperament. Mrs. Macaulay's mind seemed to turn resolutely towards politics, as if assured that there was its natural bent. She wrote remarks on Hobbes's *Rudiments of Government*, &c., and replied to Burke's pamphlet on the French Revolution. In 1785 she passed over to America, to become acquainted with Washington, for whom she had formed an unbounded admiration; and so successful was she in impressing her hero with a sense of her intelligence and merit, that they remained ever after friends for life. They corresponded; and Washington seems to have entertained a sincere respect for the popular historian.

The History of England she continued from the accession to her own time, in a series of letters addressed to her friend Dr. Wilson, now prebendary of Westminster. She also wrote "Letters on Education," an address to the people of England, and several other political pieces. In all these writings Mrs. Macaulay showed unusual ability, without ever rising to the excellence of a fine writer. And the name of the author is hardly remembered, except among historical inquirers.

JAMES RALPH.

RALPH has a claim to the attention of American men of letters, as one of the earliest of our native authors. He was probably an American by birth; and although his works were all published in London, his education was gained in Philadelphia. Here he first came into notice as one of a society of aspiring young men, who sought to improve themselves by meeting frequently for the purpose of reading their own compositions, debating, and sometimes indulging in poetry. Franklin, who was a member of the club, has left an account of it in his memoirs: he was Ralph's intimate friend for many years, and speaks of him as a man of polished manners, ingenious, and very eloquent.

In 1725 Ralph, who had probably kept a school in Philadelphia, to maintain himself, having had some disagreement with his wife's family, resolved to separate himself from her, and seek a new home in England. Franklin was to be his companion; and the two travellers set sail for London partly with the design of improving themselves by travel, and with some hope of

pecuniary profit. On their arrival in the capital, Ralph was for a time dependent on his friend for support. Franklin seems to have generously aided him as far as he was able. But an unlucky difference having sprang up between them, they parted in anger, and were never after reconciled. Franklin, who relates the story, accuses Ralph of ingratitude, and even worse conduct; but we must not receive the account of the philosopher without some caution.

The morals and principles of Ralph, however, seem never to have been pure; and he is now said to have changed his name to Franklin, and to have formed a connection with a female whom he called his wife. He set up a school, and began to make his way into notice by various literary efforts.

The first was a poem, called "Night," which must have had some merit and popularity, since it drew the attention of Pope, who, in the *Dunciad* thus assails the poet;—

"Silence, ye wolves! while Ralph to Cynthia howls,
And makes night hideous. Answer him, ye owls."

Pope adds, in a note, as an excuse for this attack, that Ralph had written a poem called "Sawney," in which he had abused Swift, Gay, and Pope; that he praises his own works in the journals, was wholly illiterate, and lived by political pamphlets. Pope, however, had just discovered his satirical powers, and seems to have exercised them indiscriminately on every writer who

was too feeble to wound in return. He was fond of boasting of his magnanimity ; but seems never to have understood the meaning of the word. And his great genius was as disturbed and unhappy in its direction as was his frame deformed and misshapen.

Ralph meanwhile had made himself of importance, and was employed by the ministry as a party writer. He was well paid for his labors, and for a time lived at ease. He was now writing his "History of England during the Reign of William, Anne, and George I.," with a review of the reigns of Charles and James. This work I have never seen, but it was well received by all the liberal party, and gave Ralph considerable reputation. It was published in two volumes folio. Ralph calls himself a "Lover of Truth and Liberty" in his title-page ; and all his writings seem to have been on the side of freedom. When Fox was making his careful researches into the value of the different histories of England, before composing his own, he found that Ralph's work was one of the most reliable and honest of them all. He pronounces it acute and diligent ; but how far he was governed by whig prejudices it is impossible to determine.

Ralph's last work was the "Case of Authors by Profession or Trade, stated with regard to Booksellers, the Stage, and the Public." This is said to show satire, good sense, and ability. In 1762 the historian died at Chiswick, leaving but few particulars of biography, except his writings.

JAMES MACPHERSON.

As the author or the discoverer of Ossian, James Macpherson has acquired a singular position in the world of letters. He has long been looked upon as a bold impostor, who deceived the best critics of his own time, and whose poems have received an applause far beyond their merits. And his historical writings, so valued in his own time, have sunk with his poetical into a suspicious and unlucky repute.

Yet Ossian still continues to be read. Its strange and solemn measure, its imaginative power, and the wild strains of Fingal and Temora still live in the intellect of his country, and it is impossible that so remarkable a poem can ever be forgotten. Later examination, too, seems to show that the author may have been far less guilty than has commonly been supposed ; that the chief features and leading incidents of his poem may, in fact, have been gathered from the Highland legends and ballads, and that he has done little more than bind together the scattered fragments, as Pisistratus did those of Homer.

It is either true, therefore, that Macpherson was a poet of unusual originality, or that he in fact discovered in the ancient Gaelic, a rich vein of poetry, from which he drew his overflowing store of imagery and thought. For, whatever else be decided, it must be allowed at this day that the author of Ossian was a poet.

Impostor or poet, few lives have glided on more successfully than that of Macpherson. He was born at Ruthven, in Invernesshire, and educated at Aberdeen. He became schoolmaster of his native village, where he was soon known as the writer of poems. But he does not seem to have escaped from obscurity until 1759, when Ferguson, Home, and other men of letters, met to inspect some fragments of Gaelic verse, which Macpherson had discovered and translated. Pleased with the novelty of the discovery, the critics urged a translation; specimens were shown to Blair, Grey, and Shenstone, who joined in admiring them, and they were published in 1760, with a preface by Blair. A subscription was in consequence raised at Edinburgh, to enable the discoverer to continue his researches, and in 1762, he produced *Fingal*, an epic poem in six books, dedicated to Lord Bute. Two years after, so rich were his discoveries, he published *Temora*, another poem in eight books: while these novel and singular productions soon gained general notice, and were eagerly read both in England and abroad, as relics of the literature of ancient Gael.

Many attempts, however, were made to shake their authenticity. Johnson doubted from the first; Blair

defended them earnestly, and Hume first believed and then rejected them. At length, however, they were abandoned, even by the most ardent of their admirers, and Macpherson was everywhere thought to have been their author.

Meanwhile, having arisen thus suddenly to notice, Macpherson was making the best use of his time in advancing his own fortune. In 1764, he was made secretary to Captain Johnstone, the Governor of Pensacola, from whence he returned in 1766, with a pension of £200 for life. He now became a violent partisan of the ministry, and wrote on their side without cessation. In 1773, however, he published his prose translation of the *Iliad*, an attempt to conform Homer to the rhythm and style of Ossian. This was succeeded by his *History*, in two volumes, quarto, with two volumes of original papers attached. For this work, the popular author received £3,000, and was now become one of the chief writers of the time. He was the friend of all the eminent men of the day, and was universally allowed to be a person of uncommon merit and talent.

Having now obtained the lucrative post of agent for the Nabob of Arcot, Macpherson entered Parliament for Camelford, and sat until 1790. He then retired from public life, rich, respected and generally liked; and he died at Inverness, 17th February, 1796.

Such was the prosperous life of the author of Ossian. His doubtful fame has never yet been cleared up, and it is still impossible to decide how far he was a poet and how

far an impostor. His History is pronounced by Fox to be full of "impudent" falsehoods; it has long sunk from public notice, and had no charm either of style or thought to relieve it from neglect. Nor is it possible to believe, that one who wrote so dull a history could have produced so wild and imaginative a poem as that which the world has generally attributed to him.

NATHANIEL HOOKE.

THE chief facts that remain of the life of Hooke, are that he was a Roman Catholic and the friend of Pope. Where he was born or where he died no one has cared to tell. He is said to have lost his fortune in the South Sea scheme, and was intimate with the gifted frequenters of Twickenham and Dawley. He died probably in 1764, leaving several works of value, and having spent a life of literary labor.

After the loss of his fortune, he was patronized by the Duchess of Marlborough, who gave him £5,000 to aid her in arranging the papers for a history of her conduct at court until 1710. It is said, however, that the historian and the duchess quarrelled before the work was finished, and that the former was dismissed. Hooke, it is also related, offended Bolingbroke by introducing a priest to the bedside of Pope, when he was dying. He belonged to the quietest sect of Catholics and was an ardent admirer of Fenelon, whose life he translated in 1723.

His History of Rome extends from the founding of

the city to the final triumph of Octavius. It is dedicated to Pope whom he flatters as a friend to virtue, to his country and to the liberties of mankind. Hooke wrote in a clear and not unpleasant style, and his History is still the best account of the Romans we have in the language. It is more thorough than Ferguson's history, and far more faithful than that of Echard. Goldsmith's Rome is only a pleasant abridgment of it; while Arnold's learned and valuable work closes with the Punic wars. It is remarkable that English scholars should have paid so little attention to the History of Rome, and that a work written more than a century ago, notwithstanding all the boasted discoveries of modern inquirers, should still remain the only tolerable narrative of the most famous nation of antiquity.

Had Arnold lived, he would no doubt have amply supplied this defect in our literature, and Mr. Merivales interesting work, has in a measure taken the place of that of Hooke. Yet neither of these scholars have produced a narrative commencing with the foundation of the great city, and closing with the fall of the republic, which can be considered a complete history. And Hooke an inferior writer and a moderate scholar, is the only English historian of Rome.

His history is chiefly a compilation from Catrou and Rouille, and various French authors, but he no doubt was familiar with the Latin historians, and was probably a far better scholar than either Ferguson or Echard. He defends the authenticity of the earlier history, previous to

the sacking of the city by the Gauls, from the skepticism of Beaufort, and shows with considerable learning that some records, and memorials must necessarily have escaped that general destruction. In politics he was liberal, siding always with the popular movement, and painting with considerable interest and power the gradual progress of Roman political reform. His method of arrangement is clear and natural, his style easy but often wanting grace and almost always animation.

Hooke is not a great historian, nor is his name famous in the annals of letters, but he has produced a useful work which finds a place in almost every library. A quietist and a Catholic, he never offends the religious feelings of his readers, or like Gibbon shocks and displeases by a cold and repulsive skepticism. He writes with a love for his theme, easily perceptible under his apparent calmness, his object was to produce a clear and entertaining compilation from all the best writers upon his subject, and in that design he has succeeded.

ADAM FERGUSON.

ADAM FERGUSON, the friend of Hume and Robertson, is chiefly remembered as the author of a History of Rome. He was born 1724, the son of a parish minister of Perthshire. Having been educated at the University of Edinburgh, he took orders, and was for some years chaplain to a Highland regiment. In 1755, however, he was made keeper of the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, and in 1757 was made Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University. Some years after, in 1764, he became Professor of Moral Philosophy, a place which must apparently have better suited his tastes.

All his works have a philosophical and ingenious character. He published, in 1767, his "Essay on the History of Civil Society," a work which was praised by all the critics, and translated into various languages. In 1774 he went as tutor to the young Earl of Chesterfield, on his travels on the Continent; and in 1778, in consequence of his political influence, was made one of the Commission sent over to America to attempt a reconciliation with the colonists. In 1783 he published

his "History of the Progress and the Termination of the Roman Republic," 3 vols., 4to. This was a clear, useful, and well arranged work, and had general success. He so far anticipated Niebuhr, as to pronounce all the authorities of the earlier portion of Roman history valueless, and he excludes from his narrative all those legends which had so long been the favorite portion of the Roman histories. Niebuhr, however, pronounces Ferguson to have had no learning—a criticism that was not unjust. His History, however, was translated into different languages, and even became a standard work on that subject in Germany.

In 1792 appeared his "Principles of Moral and Political Science," besides which he wrote several other works. He died February, 1816, at the age of ninety, the last of the famous company of Scottish authors, the contemporaries of Robertson and Hume.

His works are all useful compilations, with some show of originality, and prepared with great attention to style and method. As an historian he did well what he intended, which was to prepare a useful compendium of Roman History. His work may still be read with advantage even after the deeper researches of Arnold and Niebuhr.

EDWARD GIBBON.

GIBBON'S life was devoted to the production of a single book. He is simply the historian of the Decline and Fall of Rome, and all his faculties were happily framed and directed to the performance of this task. No writer was ever less versatile. Not a trace of a rival taste broke the grand monotony of his genius. He never showed any poetical fancy, any delicate mastery in essay writing, or any metaphysical or logical power. He believed, indeed, that in early life he had possessed a taste for mathematical study, which, if cultivated, might have raised him to fame; but this inclination seems soon to have died out, and was probably without any deep hold upon his nature. The whole tendency of his mind and his studies was historical. His retentive memory, his fondness for classical research, his readiness in acquiring languages, and his ambition of literary distinction, all seemed to prepare him for his peculiar theme. His early projects in literature, as well as his latest, were all historical. At sixteen he composed a history of the age of Sesostris; at twenty-two was writ-

ten his essay on Classical Study, made up in great part of historical disquisitions; at forty he published the first volume of the *Decline and Fall*; and at fifty he closed the labor of his life with that solemn and touching peroration written beneath the moonlit sky of Lausanne.

This unity of purpose renders his literary career one of uncommon interest to the lover of history, particularly as he has himself laid open to posterity the successive steps of his course of study. Such was his desire to become known, that he wrote no less than six memoirs of his own life, each of them affording some new view of his mental career. Besides these, we have various letters to different friends, a commonplace-book, his earliest essays, and above all his *History*, the truest reflection of his character, genius, and literary taste.

In his own family Gibbon does not seem to have been fortunate. His parents neglected him from his birth. His mother sought happiness in gaiety and amusement; his father, vain, weak, agreeable, and companionable, involved himself in debt by dissipation, and destroyed his health by self-indulgence. He was fond of distinction, without sufficient ability to obtain it; when pleased, he was polite and agreeable; when dissatisfied, all his refinement deserted him. The narrowness of his talents prevented him from reaping any benefits from his acquaintance with the men of fashion or influence of his time; and at his death he left to his son an estate embarrassed and distressed by his improvidence.

Gibbon was born at Putney, in Surrey, April 27th, O. S., 1757. He was the eldest of six children, five of whom died in their infancy. The elder born seemed likely to share the same fate. He was a sickly, feeble, misshapen child, from whom even his parents turned away in disgust. One kind heart, however, softened towards the unhappy infant, and in his aunt, Miss Catherine Porten, he found a new mother. To her care he owed his life. She watched by his sick bed, nursed him with unceasing tenderness, and by her gentleness and perseverance, preserved the misshapen infant from dying of neglect.

Slowly he began to thrive under her care. He was sent to school, instructed by private tutors, and found a home at his grandfather Porten's, rather than at the seat to which he was heir. When his mother died, in his eleventh year, he became more than ever the charge of his aunt. His feeble health prevented much application to study, but Miss Porten's conversation and directions in his reading gave his mind early an intellectual turn. Tender, frank, and decided in her opinions, she soothed his hours of pain by the pleasures of her conversation, and talked with him upon the merits of the books which they had read together.

About this time his grandfather Porten became bankrupt, and fled to the continent. His aunt, reduced thus suddenly from wealth to penury, resolved to maintain herself in independence by keeping a boarding-house for Westminster scholars. Here Gibbon followed her,

entered the school, and found himself thrown among many young men of quality who formed his aunt's family. But a general weakness, and a nervous affection of the legs, attended with excruciating pain, interfered greatly with his studies. He learned no Greek nor Latin, and made little progress except in general reading.

His sickly and painful childhood, however, was soon to ripen into a healthy youth and manhood. At sixteen his constitution underwent a remarkable change. The nervous pains and the hours of weakness and suffering passed away for ever: he became possessed of a general good health that could hardly have been expected. From that moment he had no reason to complain of the unkindness of nature; the maternal tenderness of Miss Catherine Porten had been attended by a remarkable success, and she lived to see her unprepossessing and rickety infant become the delight and the wonder of his age.

With returning health the powers of Gibbon's intellect began to unfold themselves; he soon began to read incessantly, but already his favorite works were all historical. Even at that imaginative age he cared little for the poetry and romance of his native tongue. In his account of his early studies, Shakspeare and Milton are never once mentioned. But he especially delighted in universal history, in the translations of Livy and Xenophon, a ragged Procopius, Father Paul, Davila, and Echard's History of Rome. As yet he had learned neither

Greek nor Latin, and he even argued against their value to Miss Porten, urging the superior ease of translation, and the waste of time which their acquisition required. He who was to become the most learned historian of his time could yet hardly construe Cæsar.

At sixteen he went to Oxford. Here he learned little of the usual studies pursued at the university ; and finding himself totally neglected by his instructors, gave way to his natural inclinations. He read incessantly. His passion then was for Arabic learning. His enthusiasm, however, was checked by his tutor, Dr. Waldegrave, who afterwards remembered it, and said, jokingly, that he had thought Gibbon more likely to turn Mohammedan than Roman Catholic. This passion never deserted him ; and when he came to treat of the splendid achievements of Mahomet and the Arabs, he quotes largely from the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of D'Herbelot, which he had bought from Daniel Parker, the Oxford bookseller.

In this leisure he was not idle. Here he composed his first history. It was the "Age of Sesostris." His hero he made contemporary with Solomon ; and, in order to reconcile the conflicting dates, invented a new theory, which, in after years, he did not think puerile. For a while the young historian pleased himself with the thought of publishing. Fame seemed to wait at his call, and he already heard the murmurs of popular applause. But when the first joy of creation was over, hesitation took the place of triumph. He kept the Age

of Sesostris twenty years in his desk, and then burnt it.

His active mind now busied itself with religious controversy. Having already taken the sacrament at Oxford, according to the custom of the place, without any previous reflection or advice, he was led to read Dr. Middleton's treatise on modern miracles, together with the various replies which it had occasioned. He read, weighed, and deliberated upon the arguments of the semi-infidel Protestant, and the opposing theories of the church of Rome. Singularly enough, the free-thinker yielded to the fathers. Gibbon became a Catholic. His conviction was strengthened by the aid of a young friend, who lent him Bossuet's exposition of Catholicism: he was charmed by the style of the excellent bishop, and convinced by his argument. He embraced without a scruple all the chosen doctrines of the church; he believed in the miracles, the holy oil, the sanctity of monastic life, and the mystery of transubstantiation. Not satisfied with secret faith, he resolved to proclaim his conversion openly: he fled from Oxford to London; and there, at the feet of a Catholic priest, who ventured to defy the severity of the law, he abjured his heresy, and was reconciled to the church. He next wrote a long controversial letter to his father, which had been composed under the direction of his spiritual guide, with all the ardor of a new convert.

It is easy to imagine the astonishment and anger of the weak, vain, and irascible father upon receiving such

a letter from his neglected son. The rickety boy had ever been a trouble, and now was become a disgrace. He had forfeited all his worldly prospects, and had shut himself for ever from all hope of advance either in society or in politics. The father in his anger disclosed the secret, and Gibbon was at once forbidden to return to his college; an event that accounts for much of the ill-will which he ever after bore towards his Alma Mater.

But this was not all his punishment. His father, in this untoward event, took counsel of his friends—the deist Mallet and Mr., afterwards Lord, Elliot; they decided that the new convert should be exiled to Lausanne, in Switzerland. Here he was to be placed under the charge of a rigid Calvinist divine, with the hope that his arguments might shake his recent convictions. Severity was to lend aid to argument. Gibbon's liberal allowance at Oxford was to be diminished to a scanty pittance. Instead of the elegant chambers of a gentleman commoner at Magdalen, he was to occupy a mean chamber, in a narrow street of a dull Swiss town. From the free table of his college he was to descend to the cheap and uncleanly ordinary of Madame Pavilliard.

Gibbon left England, for his Swiss exile, with all the resolution of a martyr. He was fond of disputation, and everywhere defended his new doctrines with eagerness and zeal. But he could not avoid feeling the change in his circumstances—the loss of friends, coun-

try, and those physical comforts which he always valued highly. But soon, however, the influence of youth and of an active intellect, aroused him from regret. He even congratulated himself justly in later life upon this occurrence; which, happening at a fortunate period, directed all his attention to study. Shut out from every other pleasure, he betook himself to his books. He studied French until it became more familiar to him than his native tongue: he attacked the Latin with an ardor seldom equalled. Mr. Pavilliard, an excellent scholar, directed his studies with care and zeal. And Gibbon was besides so happy as to find at Lausanne a friend, Deyverdun, a young man of unusual talent, to whom common tastes and a just regard united him for life. He was now busily occupied turning Vertot into Latin, Cicero into French, and then retranslating his version into the original languages. He particularly delighted in Cicero and Xenophon; but he read through the whole series of Latin classics; abstracted largely from all that he read, wrote various essays upon classical themes, and filled his common-place book with a profusion of references and endless extracts. Greek he was not very familiar with; but he made some progress in mathematics, and went through Locke on the Understanding. He even made some critical changes in the text of Livy, which were approved and adopted by M. Crevier, professor at Paris; he corresponded with professors Breitinger and Gesner under an assumed name: he was introduced to Voltaire, and attended

frequently at the theatre which the French poet had established at his retreat near Lake Geneva. Gibbon's mind was now evidently fixed upon literature; his constitution and habits of life seemed peculiarly to fit him for this species of labor; and his talents had already won him considerable reputation in the little world of Lausanne.

This town possessed an agreeable intelligent society to which Gibbon's position and learning gave him a ready admittance. He had already renounced the Catholic faith, under the Calvinistic influences around him, and had joined the communion of the Swiss church. Mr. Pavilliard wrote to his father and aunt with natural exultation at this happy event. "God has at length blessed my cares and heard our prayers. I have had the satisfaction of bringing back Mr. Gibbon to the bosom of our reformed church. I have made use with him, neither of rigor nor of artifice." He wrote too of Gibbon's improvement in learning, and of the purity of his morals and sentiments. These favorable accounts restored the exile to the favor of his parents, his allowance was increased, he was treated again with kindness and confidence, and Gibbon now entered the Lausanne circle as the heir of an English gentleman of fortune, possessed of uncommon talents and acquirements.

Soon, however, he came near falling into a new disgrace with his father, by a more irrevocable error. He fell in love. The object of his affection, poor and in an humble station, was yet destined to fill one of the

loftiest positions of her time, and to become the mother of the greatest of modern women. Susan Curchod was the daughter of a poor Swiss clergyman, who lived on a narrow income, in an obscure village in the Pays de Vand. He had given to his only child all that he had to bestow, a liberal education. She grew up wise, gentle, learned, and beautiful. The fame of her accomplishments spread through the little circle of Lausanne, and reached the ears of Gibbon. He became desirous of seeing the prodigy, he saw her, and resolved to make her his wife. He easily found admittance to her father's humble home, her parents favored his addresses, and Gibbon became the accepted lover of the simple Swiss maiden. One obstacle, however, intervened, Gibbon was penniless, and wholly dependent upon his father; the father forbade the marriage, and the lover reluctantly, but somewhat coldly, gave up the object of his affections for ever.

Not long after, her own father dying, Mademoiselle Curchod was reduced to great poverty, and supported her aged mother and herself by teaching young ladies at Geneva. There the wealthy banker Necker saw her, was charmed by her singular excellence and beauty, and having married the poor Swiss girl, raised her to a place among the noblest of France. The wife of the prime minister of that kingdom, Madame Necker reigned supreme in the saloons of Paris, and by her wit, her purity, and her discretion became one of the most famous women of her time. Her daughter, the cele-

brated De Stael, without her mother's beauty, inherited or surpassed her talents, but seems to have lost wholly the simplicity and purity of her Swiss ancestors. It is honorable to Gibbon that although he ceased to be a lover, he retained the friendship of Madame Necker through life, and that in so critical a proceeding, he never wounded her vanity or lost her esteem.

In appearance he was still exceedingly unattractive. The rickety child had become an awkward and ugly young man. His head was far too large for his meagre frame. His countenance, always dull, showed no trace of peculiar genius. His conversation, however, and his manners rendered him always an agreeable companion, and the fame of his learning had already preceded him in England where he was now about to return.

In his nineteenth year, he came back to his native land. The only person in England he longed to see was his aunt, Miss Porten. His father he approached with indifference and alarm. He remembered his severity in infancy, he felt that he had offended, and he dreaded the influence of a second wife, who now had taken the place of his mother. But the elder Gibbon received his son with favor, if not with affection. He had no other heir, and he felt a natural pride in the accomplishments of the gifted youth. Even the step-mother proved kinder than Gibbon could have hoped, and they remained friends for ever after.

Strong affections and high impulses did not descend in the Gibbon family. The historian in many respects

resembled his father; he had the same vanity in gay society, the same regard for trifles; he liked fashion, show and public honors. If it had been in his power, he would have been almost as well pleased to have shone the leader of a circle of fashion, as to have risen to the height of literary fame. Had he possessed a more pleasing figure, a greater ease of manner, or a mind less deeply imbued with early study, he would have sunk into the class of Beauclercs and Langtons, who trifled with literature and made fashion their serious pursuit. Happily, as Gibbon himself confesses, circumstances conspired to strengthen his literary taste, and the disappointment of all his other aspirations threw him back for consolation upon his studies.

With this mixed nature, Gibbon found himself in England at twenty-one, almost unknown. His father, for many years, had lived the life of a country gentleman, and mingled with few but his country neighbors. His wealth was not sufficient to give him weight in society, and the nature of his taste and the quality of his intellect did not tend to increase his social importance. When, therefore, the young Gibbon went up to London, his father could introduce him to but one family, that of the Mallets, and he found himself neglected and lost amid the bustle of the metropolis. To the vain and ambitious young man, this neglect was peculiarly mortifying. He returned disappointed to Beriton, but resolved to compose something in literature, which should give him an immediate access to fame.

Gibbon's literary ambition was never pure. It was rather a longing for temporary distinction than a desire to become of use to his age and his fellow men. He sought fame rather as a means of personal advantage than for any great and noble purpose. Even his love for literature was never that high and honorable passion which filled all the nature of Hume, and he seems now, abandoning the common professions as unsuited to his habits, to have betaken himself to his studies as a means of self-aggrandizement, rather than as the source of purest satisfaction.

Literature has many allurements which viewed even in a worldly light set it, in some respects, far above all other pursuits. The fortunate author is at once introduced into a wide circle of friends and admirers. While the rising professional man, confined within his narrow circle and daily routine, is unknown beyond his immediate precincts, the author penetrates into all lands, and rises with a single effort to general renown. While the man of fortune is a stranger beyond his own little circle of influence, the author finds friends in every class of readers. Various distinctions, too, lie open to the author, which are closed to the majority of men. Politicians are glad to avail themselves of the renown of a great name to adorn an administration. Governments bestow favors upon the writer because he is able to make a generous return. The writer, too, of all other professions, has the least dependent life. He is free to labor or to be idle, to create or to destroy. What he writes is

his own; his thoughts, his style, and his peculiar projects, no man can take from him. While there is something so engaging in the thought of holding a vast intellectual influence, and of forming the opinions and feelings, not only of the present but of the future, that few cultivated minds escape the desire of entering upon the field of literature.

These inferior impulses had great weight with Gibbon. He was yet obscure, and unimportant; and while aspiring to be at the front of society he occupied a low station in the middle rank. Eager for an easy opening to political influence, he was yet without any hope of future advancement. Except for his literary designs, he seemed destined to wear out his life as a simple country gentleman, and to follow in the path of a father whose example he could not approve, nor follow without reluctance.

He now resolved, therefore, to gather together various essays which he had already composed, and by adding new matter, to prepare a work of some size and importance. His *Essay on the Study of Literature* has every trace of its origin. It is the ambitious work of a young scholar, who had read and thought more upon classical subjects than most of his contemporaries, and who was an earnest lover of the studies of which he treated. Through the influence of the philosophers of Paris, classical literature had lately fallen into contempt. The successors of Lepsius and Causobon ranked in the third class of the French academicians. D'Alem-

bert and the mathematicians sneered at the possessors of memory, and declared that they had been superseded by the possessors of judgment and invention. To refute this error, and to assert the dignity of classical studies, Gibbon composed his first work. From another emotion of literary vanity he wrote it in French. He thought the Parisian critics would be the more surprised to find their favorite theory assailed not only by an Englishman, but by a foreigner writing in their own language.

Through the aid of the Mallets and other friends, he sent copies of his book to various influential persons both in France and England, and he heard with exultation that it had been well received abroad. At home in England it made little sensation. But in France Count Caylus said, "that Mr. Gibbon had read many books, and read them well." This was a just estimate of the work. It was simply the laborious effort of a young writer, who had remembered what he read.

Meanwhile Gibbon and his father had joined the militia, which was then formed by volunteers, for the protection of the country. The father took rank as major, the son as captain, and both entered with spirit into the unmeaning exercises of the camp. The historian professes to have entered unwillingly; yet, for an ambitious young man, the step was not imprudent. He here made many influential acquaintances, and learned much of the duties of camp life. The militia occupied him for three years and a half, during all which time

he had but little leisure for study. He was led into habits of conviviality to which he had before been a stranger, and made no progress in any literary production. Yet the great work to which he was afterwards to dedicate himself was materially aided by his military experience. His attention was thus turned to the military works of the ancients. He read the institutes of Onizander and Arrian's *Tactics*, as translated in the memoirs of the Academy, and he carefully studied and analyzed the account of Cæsar's campaigns. We shall find in noticing his *History*, that each of these works is of great use to him in his account of the Roman armies, and we no doubt owe his clear and well read dissertation on the Roman legions in his first volume, to his training in the Suffolk militia.

The militia was disbanded in October, 1762. Gibbon regained his freedom. He was once more to decide upon a course of study; but hesitated awhile between the classics and mathematics. He had evidently been more moved by the sneers of the Parisian wits, than he cared to allow; and so strong was his trust in his genius for mathematics, that he consulted a learned friend and mathematician as to the best works upon that science, for the purpose of commencing a course of study. Fired by the examples of D'Alembert, of Maupertuis, and the Parisian school, he would seek renown by the discovery of a new calculus, or the decision of some vexed problem in astronomy. Had he pursued such a course of study we should have lost the *Decline and Fall*; but

would hardly have gained an Euler. Gibbon had little of the exactness of the mathematician, and too much restless speculation ever to have given himself steadily to any abstract calculations.

Soon, however, he gave up his mathematical scheme, and set himself to make progress in his own field—that of classical learning. His first effort was to acquire a readiness in reading Greek, and we find him in his twenty-seventh year sitting down to a close study of that language. To critical scholarship he never aspired: he was content if he could construe readily, and gather the general sense of his author. His learning was to consist rather in the knowledge of books in the learned languages, than in a perfect acquaintance with the languages themselves. His first step towards acquiring Greek was to read Homer diligently, and then Longinus on the Sublime. Gradually he began to obtain a power over Homer's native tongue, which satisfied and delighted him; and his labors were every day lightened by sense of his rapid and easy advance.

In the meantime historical projects were continually floating through his mind exciting a momentary enthusiasm, and then put to flight by some weighty objection. Sometimes he would select a subject connected with Italian or French history, then the baronial wars of John and Henry III., the Life of Edward the Black Prince, of Sir Philip Sidney, and the Marquis of Montrose, fixed his regard. At another time he chose Charles VIII. of France for his theme, made some

researches, and even wrote a labored essay on the validity of his title. Finally, however, a different hero seems to have decided him. Sir Walter Raleigh, learned, brave, speculative, a courtier and a soldier, had for Gibbon uncommon attractions. He resolved to compose his life, in a manner more worthy of the hero than the tedious compilations of Oldys and Birch. He now read all that could throw light on the age of Elizabeth, the various lives of Sir Walter, the Bacon papers, Birch's collections, Mallet's Bacon, and numerous other authorities. His mind was evidently engaged in his work, and he hoped to be able to produce something upon this engaging subject that should deserve lasting fame. But after a few months of labor, pleasant and profitable, he grew discouraged and dismayed. He found that the life of Sir Walter, with some interesting passages, must at times sink into tedious dullness from the want of proper materials. Little that was new remained to be said, the harvest having been reaped by Oldys and Birch; and Gibbon found that he could do little more than compose a tame abridgment of Oldys. The subject, too, had been treated by Walpole, Mallet, Robertson, and Hume; the young author shrank with affright from a comparison with these veteran writers, and abandoned the tempting theme for ever.

One feels curious to know what kind of a biography Gibbon would have produced, and whether his projected work would have risen to the rank of a classic or fallen to the level of Oldys and Birch. Between

biography and history there is little resemblance. The qualities that shine in the one are useless in the other. The biographer fixes his attention upon the delicate shades of character, detects the motives and feelings of his subject in the simplest actions, pursues the gradual progress of his nature through varied scenes, and presents a single life in all its numberless manifestations. Philosophical theories and learned disquisitions have no place in biography: calmness and impartiality are equally a blemish. The biographer must be a good hater or lover of his subject. He may excite the attention of the reader by a keen and hostile examination, as well as by generous enthusiasm and praise. Johnson's lives of Milton or Swift lose no interest when we perceive the intense dislike of the author to his subject, and men unhappily follow too eagerly an unfavorable criticism or a distorted portrait. The impartial biographer, in fact, wins no regard because he carries with him neither curiosity nor enthusiasm, and there is no life in the language having this quality, that can be read with any patience.

Gibbon had none of the qualities of a good biographer. His style, heavy and sonorous, was never suited to convey the delicate painting of character, or to unfold a simple tale of domestic life and manners. His imagination, so grand and effective when exercised upon the fading splendors of Rome, could have found nothing to arouse it sufficiently in the versatile life of Raleigh. He had never become familiar with the literature of the Eliza-

bethan age, and could never apparently take pleasure in any poetry that was not modelled after the school of Voltaire, nor was it likely that his mind could ever have sympathized with the peculiar genius of Raleigh, that he could have enjoyed its strange blending of opposing qualities, its passion for nature and metaphysics, for simplicity and splendor, for wild adventure and for simple quiet. A good biographer must understand his subject, and must, in fact, resemble the character of which he treats; but there was no trace of similarity between the cold, vain, and methodical nature of Gibbon and the ardent and poetic temperament of Raleigh.

Having abandoned this design, he never again recurs to his biographical scheme until towards the close of his life, when he proposed to amuse his idle hours by composing a series of lives in the manner of Plutarch. He now returned to history, and selected for his subject the "History of the Liberty of the Swiss." No choice could have been more unlucky. All his previous studies having been directed to classical literature, he knew nothing of modern history, and was more familiar with the politics of Rome than with those of England. The History of the Swiss too, was closely connected with that of the rest of Europe. To write well upon it, the author must possess a knowledge of French, German, Italian and Flemish History. But Gibbon could not even read a page of German, and was a stranger to the annals of the chief European states.

Another subject, at the same time, presented itself, the

History of the Medici. This too seems at first to have delighted him. He would no doubt have traced the revival of learning and the growth of the Italian republic, with considerable interest. The fate of the Medici, however, the thread of the narrative, was too narrow a theme to employ his peculiar powers. He hesitated between the two projects, and in the meantime travelled upon the continent, saw Paris, revisited Lausanne, passed into Italy and entered with swelling breast the fallen capital of the world.

At Paris he saw much of the best company and mingled with the eminent men of letters. His "Essay" had opened the way for him to some notice, and gave him sufficient reputation to entitle him to a place at the table of Baron D'Holbach, or in the assemblies of Madame Geoffrin. He became acquainted with D'Alembert, Diderot, and the whole circle of philosophers. From thence, after a pleasant visit, he went to Lausanne, visited Voltaire at Ferney, and boasts that he dined twice with Prince Louis of Würtemberg. He next entered the simpler society of Lausanne. He lived on the banks of the well known lake, mingled with the youth of the place in their gay reunions, and recalls with evident pleasure, as his favorite resort, an assembly of young and unmarried ladies, the eldest not over twenty, called "the Society of the Spring." They met frequently to dance, sing, play cards and act comedies, with the pure and artless manners of the Swiss valley.

Lausanne was the only place that Gibbon really loved. He had entered it with reluctance, a dejected exile, he learned to look upon it as his only home. The lake, the the skies, the mountains, the gay society, and the literary leisure, threw around him a charm which he could never resist. And he ever regarded its well known scenes, with all the affection and enthusiasm that his sluggish nature allowed.

During all his travels he was constantly preparing himself, although apparently, unconsciously, for his favorite theme. At Paris he had studied in the Academy of Medals, in Lausanne and Geneva he read constantly. But as he approached Italy, he filled his mind with the antiquities and topography of Rome. He read Nardini, Donati, and all the topographers, compared the passages of the poets and historians, that relate to the eternal city, his commonplace-book was filled with extracts, and his memory overburdened with a boundless abundance of learning, before he ventured to cross the forum or to stand upon the capitol.

At length he believed himself prepared to enter Rome. It was a moment of strong and lasting emotion. Twenty-five years afterwards, when he wrote an account of his journey, he recalls the agitated feelings with which he entered the city, and the sleepless night that preceded his first walk along the hills of Romulus, and across the forum of Cicero. A more memorable event now happened. Fate had let him to his oracle. He was here to receive a suggestion which was to be the

guide of his future life. While he sat musing amid the ruins of the capitol, and the barefooted friars were chanting vespers in the temple of Jupiter, he conceived, under the fading splendors of an October evening, the design of writing the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

While at Lausanne, during this tour, Gibbon first met Mr. Holroyd, who, with Deyverdun, his early Swiss friend, seems to have been the person to whom, of all his acquaintances, he was most attached. Holroyd had talents, was a good speaker, writer and politician, and by his practical abilities became eminent in politics, grew rich, and was afterwards created Lord Sheffield. He continued through life Gibbon's most valued friend, and when the historian died, compiled and edited his memoirs.

Upon his return to England, Gibbon did not immediately give himself to his proposed work. He even commenced the History of the Swiss, and by the aid of his friend, Deyverdun, who had come over to England seeking employment, he was enabled to use the German authorities. These Deyverdun translated and thus supplied Gibbon's want of scholarship. The historian now read, studied and wrote with all his natural industry, until, after two years of preparation, the first book of his narrative was completed. He hastened to submit the manuscript to a circle of his literary friends, among whom was Mr. Hume. The critics assembled to hear the work read, and the author sat among the company

unknown and eager to receive their decision. This work was written in French, in a heavy and inflated style, while the subject was not of sufficient interest to deserve attention. The opinion of the critics was unfavorable. Gibbon listened unobserved to their severe strictures with what composure he might, and then returning home, committed his unfortunate manuscript to the flames. Mr. Hume, however, who knew the author, wrote him a kind letter, expressing his satisfaction with his production, urging him to continue it, but complaining, at the same time, of his use of the French instead of his native tongue.

Such was the fate of his earliest historical performance. He was apparently discouraged, his dream of historical success faded, and for a time he seems to have abandoned all thoughts of his greater designs, although he had not given up literature. His friend, Deyverdun, desirous of making himself known in England, and of obtaining a means of livelihood, projected a work in French, "*Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne*," a kind of yearly review of the literary productions of the time. To this work Gibbon contributed an article upon Lord Lyttleton's *History of Henry II.*, which displays the same traits of style and manner with his later writings. It has the same sonorous flow of language, the same ironical humor. It delicately ridicules Christianity in the person of its defender, although he allows Lyttleton to be a faithful and industrious historian. Gibbon takes this opportunity to pay a labored compli-

ment to the historical philosophy of Hume and the eloquent style of Robertson. A second volume of the *Mémoires* appeared in 1768, when Gibbon having obtained the place of tutor to the children of Sir Richard Worsley for Deyverdun, the undertaking ceased. The review had never any large circulation, but it introduced Gibbon to the acquaintance of Lord Chesterfield.

His next effort to gain publicity was an attack upon Warburton's famous "Divine Legation of Moses." This work, now scarcely remembered, was at that time looked upon by all churchmen as a production of wonderful learning and ability. But the position of its author, even more than the fame of his productions, invited Gibbon's attack. Warburton was the ruling critic of the time, the fiercest, the most unsparing and most feared. He had made his way in literature by defending Pope's *Essay on Man*, against the charge of skepticism, and thus gaining the friendship and patronage of the poet. In the church he had risen by his violent abuse of everything that tended towards infidelity. He had maintained an unceasing warfare with the whole tribe of skeptics, from Bolingbroke to Hume; and by a zeal that bordered on brutality, and a natural force of intellect and keenness of satire, had placed himself at the head of the critical literature of the time. He was the dictator and the tyrant of the world of letters. Gibbon's vanity led him to assault the champion on his own ground. Warburton, in his "Divine Legation," advanced the theory, that the descent of Eneas into the

infernal world was only a mythical account of his initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries. This singular hypothesis had been readily adopted by English scholars, accustomed to receive whatever Warburton advanced. Gibbon showed its weakness in a learned essay, but the critics scarcely noticed his performance; they could see no merit in an assailant of their acknowledged chief. However, Gibbon was cheered by the praise of the learned Heyne of Gottingen, and the essay did no harm to his classical repute.

Far off, and looming over the horizon, lay his great work, towards which all his other labors instinctively tended. The History was not, indeed, begun. But he was reading and preparing his path towards his lifelong labor. He was now in his thirty-second year. His fortune was sufficient for his respectable support; his library was large, and was daily increasing; his reading on all topics of classical history had been varied, if not deep; and his passion for literary fame, not decayed amid the allurements of pleasure and gaiety, was sufficiently strong to lead him to encounter great labor in the pursuit of his favorite object. He now ran over a vast field of learning. He first read, pen in hand, and with his teeming commonplace-book at his side, all those historians in Latin or Greek, who had written upon imperial Rome.. The scholar will readily perceive what a wide prospect is here opened, embracing the Augustan authors, the Byzantine historians, Dion Cassius, and an endless crowd of lesser

authorities. He next studied the annals of the middle ages until the fourteenth century ; and then commencing that investigation which has given an unlucky renown to his work, followed the history of Christianity from its obscure origin in the reign of Tiberius, to its final triumph under his successors. This vast course of study suited well with the nature of Gibbon. He delighted in discussing mooted points in antiquity, in reckoning up armies, in settling revenues, and in collating and correcting his authorities. His imagination, which would have slumbered over the petty wars of a Swiss valley, was filled and charmed by the spectacle of decaying Rome ; his style, his language, and the whole nature of his intellect seemed happily adapted to his theme, and he had now found an object worthy of his genius, and which seemed to engross all his regard.

He was not, however, allowed to pursue his studies without various interruptions. His father's declining health was embittered by many troubles. He was deeply embarrassed, besides having an expensive lawsuit, which added to his difficulties : he endeavored to relieve himself by a new mortgage on his estate, at the expense of his son, who willingly consented to the sacrifice ; but all was in vain, as the elder Gibbon's imprudence increased with his years. At length he died, in his sixty-fourth year ; and if the character drawn of him by William Law, under the name of Flatus, be true, he was hardly fitted to give happiness to others, or to enjoy life himself. Yet Gibbon speaks of him as a man

of honor, politeness, and of a cheerful temper, possessed of liberal sentiments, a graceful person, and a polite address. He seems, on the whole, to have had no good influence upon the character of the historian.

Gibbon was left with an embarrassed estate and an uncertain income. But he had always used economy, incurred no debts, and possessed a decent support. His winters were passed in London, his summers at his country house at Beriton. London, however, had unusual charms for the man of letters, and he often lingered out a great part of the summer among its books and its society. Although with few intimate friends, he had a wide circle of acquaintance; he professed himself a man of fashion as well as of letters, and was as often at Boodle's and White's as at the Literary Club. He boasts that before he left England, in 1783, there were few persons of any eminence in the literary or political world to whom he was a stranger. Yet Mr. Holroyd seems still to have been his only intimate friend, and with Deyverdun, continued to share the whole of his feeble affections.

Gibbon at this period of his life was grown stout and not ill-formed. He had money to dress with, and appeared in fashionable attire. His manners were precise and finished, and his conversation flowed on in sounding and pointed periods. He was well known at the tables of the great, and was everywhere recognized as a man of high literary attainments, and of a degree of learning remarkable in one who seemed somewhat

trivial in his tastes and nice and affected in his manners. He usually wore a suit of velvet with a bag and a sword; in conversation he tapped his snuff-box, smiled constantly, and rounded his periods as perfectly as in the *Decline and Fall*. His countenance was dull and unmeaning, his features thick, his face fat and gross and his mouth a round hole in the centre of his visage. Yet in society he was an agreeable companion, and his whole air and manner were those of a well-bred man.

Gibbon was now settled in his own house in London, with a library of carefully selected volumes around him, He commenced the first volume of the *History*. But as yet he had no fixed plan, and all was uncertainty. He had not yet decided upon the name of his work, one of its chief merits, for under no other title would it so fill the imagination of the reader, or so accurately express the noble theme. Rome under the pagan emperors declined, under the Christian it fell, and the whole image of that grand historical spectacle is brought to the mind by the simple mention of Gibbon's title. His next difficulty was the order and limit of his narrative, where he should begin and where to close. The termination he did not probably decide upon until later; the beginning he might perhaps have improved. He would have done well to have given more attention to the Augustan period, when the decline of Rome began to be apparent, or even to have extended his inquiries back into the days of the republic. In philosophy he fails signally, when he assumes that the empire was at its

greatest strength in the time of the Antonines. The decline of Rome, in fact, proceeded from causes which Gibbon wholly overlooked, from the military spirit of the nation, from the want of any true freedom, from the influence of unbounded slavery, and from the decay of agriculture in Italy and Greece. But Gibbon, commencing with the apparently happy age of Nerva and Trajan, sees none of the elements of destruction which had so long been at work in the midst of the empire, and the principal causes to which he attributes its final ruin, are the invasion of the barbarians, and the rise of Christianity. The historian was plainly no philosopher, and never was a more feeble solution offered for a great problem than his speculations on this point. In the time of Augustus, Italy was only nominally mistress of the world. Even already, her unwarlike people trembled before a German or Dacian invasion. In the age of Hadrian the Roman Empire had ceased to exist. The real emperors were the Gallic and Germanic legions.

Gibbon's next anxiety was with regard to style. He lived at a period when stylists ruled. No work that offended the ear by harshness, or that ran into too great novelty of manner or diction, could be expected to please. English authors studied day and night, Swift and Addison, or imitated the sounding periods of the mighty Johnson. In France a similar taste prevailed, and French writers universally followed the clear manner of Voltaire. To write a plain and inoffensive

style was then easy, because the same models were followed by every author. But to produce any thing new within the strict rules of the established taste, to avoid the reproach of tameness, yet to follow the prevailing mode, to rise into originality yet to avoid giving offence, was a task more difficult than the less tramelled modern can conceive. Gibbon was a classicist; he wished to preserve the closest adherence to the established standard, and yet to rise above the tone of Lyttleton or Birch. He was conscious, however, that his prevailing defect was a tendency to declamation, that he spoke, and wrote in a manner bordering on the pompous and burlesque. He knew that the ridicule of the critics would fasten with avidity on any such trait in his writing. Yet on the other hand he feared that should he curb this free and declamatory style, the true image of his intellect, he must sink into a chronicler as dull and tiresome as Rapin or Echard. Style too had been the principal charm of his predecessors, Robertson and Hume, and should he fail in this respect, however excellent his method or full his learning, he could never assume the place he coveted, that of the third great British historian. He had evidently a just idea of his own powers, when he declares that Hume's style seemed to him inimitable, but that Robertson's he did not despair of equalling.

His anxiety led him to unusual labor. He wrote the first chapter three times over, before he was satisfied with its sounding rhythm; the second and third he

wrote but twice; while each page, as he advanced, grew easier, until he acquired by diligent toil that pompous diction and style in which he ever afterwards wrote with confidence and ease.

Disappointment, too, in another scheme of ambition had redoubled his eagerness to distinguish himself in letters. In Parliament, where he had attained a seat by the kindness of his friend and relative, Mr. Elliot, he found all his acquisitions, his genius, and his love of distinction led only to mortification and neglect. In Parliament he was never able to open his mouth. While Burke, Fox, and a crowd of lesser speakers, were charming and guiding the nation by a free flow of ready thought, Gibbon, with infinitely greater learning, could never master sufficient resolution to make a single speech. He had entered the House with the design of making his way in politics: he even declared to his friend, Mr. Holroyd, that a fine prospect was now opening to him, and he evidently believed that he should easily surpass those inferior politicians who then held the public ear. He would have rejoiced to have taken his place by the side of the ready North or the powerful Thurlow, among the leaders of the ministerial side, and was, no doubt, with his usual worldliness, looking forward to a share in the spoils of party. His father and his friends united in encouraging him in his design, and filled him with the hope of unbounded success. Often, with these expectations, he longed, as he sat listening to the happy

eloquence of others, to be able to rise and give utterance to the crowd of arguments and rejoinders that pressed upon him when in his seat. But fear, irresolution, and timid vanity conspired to check him ere he rose. Like Addison, he never conquered this proud timidity. Once he had even prepared himself with great labor to speak on the American rebellion: he had read Hutcheson and Mandust, and even boasted in letters to his friends, that he should make no intolerable speaker; but as the moment for rising came, his courage sank: the good speakers filled him with despair, the bad with terror, and he remained mute. His hope of becoming a great political leader was never to be fulfilled, and he must be content to remain for ever an insignificant member of that assembly, in which he had hoped to take place by the side of Fox and Burke.

His mortification, however, was soothed by a success greater and more lasting than any he could have obtained in the House. The first volume of his *History* was now ready for the press. It had been refused by Mr. Elmsley, the first bookseller to whom he applied; but Cadell and Strahan consented to bring it into the world. Gibbon was yet so little known as an author, that but small expectations were entertained of the work. Five hundred copies only were to be printed, until Mr. Strahan, struck with the manuscript, increased the number to a thousand. The foresight of the printer deserves to be remembered. He saw at once the great value of the work as it was going through the press.

He told Gibbon that it was destined to be translated in many languages, and to prove a lasting monument of his genius and ability. This was the first breath of fame that had reached the ears of the author.

Towards the close of the year 1775, the first volume was published, and it rose at once to the height of popularity. The first edition was exhausted in a few days: a second soon followed. The work lay on every toilet and every table: it was hailed with applause by those most competent to decide. Robertson wrote of it in the most flattering language. Hume, then dying slowly and patiently, wrote the author a letter of congratulation only a few weeks before his death. Gibbon's ascent to fame was as sudden as that of Byron or Scott. He had not, like Hume, to toil through long years of neglect; and even his skepticism, which had proved so fatal to the former, served to render him more secure of notice and admiration.

The popularity of the book arose from the style, the subject and the unusual mode of treating the rise of Christianity. The style was wholly his own. It was imposing, thoughtful, and apparently philosophic; and while it wanted many a grace which lies hidden to the casual reader in the delicate rhythm of Hume, it was far more likely to please the general taste. The subject was the finest that had ever been selected for historical composition. It was more striking than Robertson's Charles V., more generally attractive than Hume's reign of the Stuarts. Its immense range of topics, its solemn

and alluring theme, the august and poetical spectacle of declining Rome, filled the imagination of the age. A less praiseworthy quality increased the general interest. Gibbon had brought down to the common apprehension all the cavils and the reproaches of learned skeptics against the early Christians. He had sketched the growth of the infant church, surrounded by corruptions, heresies, dissensions, and all the impurity of human passions. He mocked at the heroism of the martyr and palliated the persecutions of Nero and Trajan. He laid bare all the deformities of the early church, which had heretofore remained hidden to the general reader; and under a seeming respect, had attacked Christianity in a manner that aroused all the indignation of its defenders.

After the first burst of his triumph, therefore, was over, and when men began to reflect upon the tendency of the book, it at once attained a new notoriety from the clamor of its numerous assailants. Davies, Chelsum, Abthorpe, Bishop Watson, Dr. Priestly, Sir David Dalrymple, besides innumerable pamphlets and sermons, united to bring Gibbon into notice by assailing his book. These opponents, however, were unfit to encounter the great skeptic on the field of scholarship. Their attacks upon his faith he never condescended to notice, but in his "Vindication," which he published in reply to their clamor, he confined himself to the refutation of the charge of a want of historical fidelity. His assailants had not spared his feelings; one denounced him as an

infidel, another accused him of hypocrisy; Whitaker asserted that he could not read Greek; Priestly, that he said one thing and meant another. To none of these attacks would he consent to reply. But to Davies, who had charged him with misquotation, he gave a complete and final answer. The feeble assailant sank without a struggle before the lance of Achilles, and even Dr. Johnson allowed that if Davies had made the errors Gibbon had convicted him of, he must have been "a blockhead."

The historian came out from the contest invincible. His accuracy had been tested by the keenest vigilance of his enemies and had proved faultless. His learning astonished and dismayed his opponents; and he seemed to triumph over the feebleness of Christianity, and to prepare that downfall of the prevailing faith, which Hume on his deathbed had foretold. Happily, however, there was a vitality in Christianity, which neither Hume nor Gibbon had perceived; and their vague and superficial arguments aimed rather at the church than at its faith, at its errors rather than its objects, have long lost all influence, except as curious speculations and striking historical passages.

In the moment of his fame, Gibbon went over to Paris, and visited M. and Madame Necker, the Susan Curchod of his youth. He found her no longer the humble daughter of a country pastor, but the leader of Parisian taste and fashion. Among ambassadors, authors, nobles, and artists, she retained the same dignity

and inborn superiority which had marked her obscure youth, and Gibbon found in his old mistress, a faithful and devoted friend. She, too, perhaps, was no less gratified at the change which had taken place in the position of her youthful admirer. From obscurity he had risen to fame, from dependence to wealth; and he was now come to receive her congratulations upon a literary triumph almost unprecedented in letters.

Gibbon next studied chemistry and anatomy for recreation. He then wrote a political paper, a "Memoir Justificatif," defending the conduct of England against the manifesto of Louis XVI. France was then about taking part with America. Gibbon defended Lord North's policy, and was soon after rewarded by a place at the Board of Trade, with £800 a year—no mean addition to his embarrassed finances. His "Memoir" received a severe reply from the keen, satirical, and shameless Wilkes. Wilkes calls the Memoir "a contemptible compilation," and observes that Gibbon had £1,000 a year for writing a defence of infidelity, while Milton had only £1,000 for his noble defence of England. He then drew a happy and striking parallel between the decline of Great Britain, which had just lost her colonies, and that of Rome. Gibbon, however, was never sensitive to shame, and enjoyed his income, undisturbed by the abuse of Wilkes.

Soon after, in 1779, came out two more volumes of the History. They were received at first with coldness, but gradually rose to sell as well as the former. They

were less acceptable, however, in style, for Gibbon never wrote so well as in the first volume. Yet the subject had lost none of its interest. The decline of the empire was now grown more marked, the crowd of its enemies increased, the feeble successors of Augustus grew less worthy of the throne. Theological disputes increased in rancor; Arianism, Gnosticism, and the various heresies, afforded Gibbon room for many sneers at the church, and lent interest to the theme. The Western Empire had now fallen for ever, and Constantinople was the capital of the world. He hesitated a moment whether to continue the work, and then plunged with new zeal into the authorities for a fresh volume. He could not resolve to abandon the vast subject which had at first suggested itself to his mind, which he had promised the public, if possible, to complete, and which his clear historical genius saw in shadowy grandeur standing out from his rude material, as the Venus stood before Praxiteles in its marble block.

His political life was now over. He had never been of much use to his party; and when the administration fell, he gave up politics gladly: he was probably more unwilling to part with his place in the Board of Trade, with its considerable sinecure salary. He made some exertions to be appointed the secretary to the Paris legation, the place which Hume had held: but a Mr. Anthony Storer was preferred. His hopes no longer rested in England; there he could have no prospect of a further rise in station, while his moderate income pre-

vented him from being at ease in London. With his taste for fine dress, a carriage and library, a house in town and country, he could not expect to be safe at the capital. Philosophy had never lessened his desires, but it taught him to fly from ruin.

Lausanne once more, the home of his youth, and of Susan Curchod, the land of cheapness, gaiety, and ease, had now more allurements for the unphilosophic student than any other place. He seems to have never known any patriotic sentiment or any strong love for any person or country. His only object was to be amused, and amusement could be had at Lausanne cheaper and with less trouble than any place he knew of. There, too, his learned friend, Mr. Deyverdun, was settled, with whom he planned to take a house and live in literary labor; and he wrote to his friend Lord Sheffield that his decision was irrevocable; that he would abandon England for ever.

His life is singularly deficient in dates. Like his History, it deals in sentiment and generalities, when facts would be more satisfactory. The exact date of his journey is not given, when he sold his effects, except the library, mounted a post-chaise, and set off for his Alpine retreat.

This resolution to return to Lausanne marks the final triumph of his literary taste. He had for a time apparently wandered away from his true path. He had attempted, with uncommon ill success, to succeed in the career of a politician; he had sought to shine in the

social circles of the metropolis, in the assemblies of ministers, and in the conversation of its literary club. He had been an unsuccessful candidate for office, and had vainly hoped to recruit his fortune in the spoils of party. When the notorious coalition of Mr. Fox and Lord North was formed after the peace, Gibbon was willing to have accepted almost any appointment that would have enabled him to have maintained his luxurious mode of living. All these expectations, however, were now over. Disappointment once more awakened his literary ardor, and he had long pictured to himself and his intimate friends a scheme of abandoning England for ever, and of settling at Lausanne in dignity, ease, and the prosecution of his History.

This design his friends ridiculed and opposed. Lord Sheffield called him a "fool," and prophesied that he would soon repent of it. But Gibbon was now resolved. He bade farewell to his native land, where he complains that he was lost in a crowd, and set out for his Swiss retreat. Various motives no doubt served to strengthen him in this resolution. He had early learned to prefer the foreign mode of living, to the more quiet and regular life in England. His health too began to be affected by a fatal disease which he sedulously concealed from his most intimate friends, but which must have led him to desire seclusion. While his vain aspiring spirit was allured by the prospect of reigning over a circle of intelligent and well bred subjects at Lausanne, instead of being lost in the crowds of London.

Before leaving England he had already finished his fourth volume. In the third he had completed the History of Western Rome, with the fall of the eternal city. He was now to direct his attention to the Eastern Empire. The subject had lost none of its interest ; each volume opened upon a series of inquiries, and of pictures of the most important passages in the history of man. The fourth relates the struggle of the great generals of Justinian, Belisarius, and Narses against the vast circle of enemies who were pressing upon the declining state. Persia, the Goths, Huns, Turks, and Scythians, were now enclosing the vast empire, as if about to sever it in innumerable fragments. The church was disturbed by the heresies and corrupted by the vices of its leaders, the whole people of the empire were sunk into dependence upon their barbarous allies for protection, and Justinian among all his hosts of subjects scarcely possessed a soldier. In this decline of their arms and literature, the Romans possessed but one claim to distinction in their legal studies and labors, and in the production of a code of law which has formed the basis of all modern jurisprudence.

One of the most learned and powerful of Gibbon's essays, is his account of the Institutes of Justinian. To have composed this chapter alone, would have entitled him to fame. Such happy condensation, clearness and power, such splendor of style and wide range of learning, no other legal work of the age could possibly surpass, and no lawyer considers his education complete,

until he has mastered this wonderful example of Gibbon's power of generalization.

At Lausanne, he lived with his friend Deyverdun, who owned a house on the shores of Lake Geneva. The situation was delightful, overlooking the lake, the distant shores, and a wide expanse of fields, mountains, and water. In various letters Gibbon dwells with exultation on this fine prospect, comparing it with the narrow courtyard of his London house. Both unmarried, the two friends lived together with as little interference with each other as possible. They breakfasted separately, and never entered each other's rooms without knocking thrice. At two they dined together, perhaps with a few friends, and passed the afternoon in playing chess, conversation or society. In the evenings the coffee-houses, or the assemblies, drew them into a pleasant society where Gibbon boasts that he soon became a favorite. In return for the civilities of the townspeople, he often gave dinners, suppers and even balls, entertaining sometimes an hundred people at table. He was always abstemious, his health probably forbidding him to indulge as others might do. Switzerland was now the resort of many English, and Gibbon, far from finding Lausanne too solitary, sometimes complains of too much company. The great had not forgotten him, and he wrote to the Sheffields that Mr. and Mrs. Necker, Prince Henry of Prussia, and Mr. Fox, the Duchess of Devonshire, and various continental nobles were his frequent guests.

His History continued the chief object of his regard, employing all his mornings, and sometimes encroaching upon the night. His library, which he had carefully selected, embraced all the materials that he required: he wrote steadily, although not rapidly, often complaining of the interference of indolence, company, and visiting. The subject of the fifth and sixth volumes was no longer Rome: his theme was apparently lost in a series of splendid disquisitions on the history of the Middle Ages and of Europe. The rise and establishment of the Mahometan power, its greatness and decay; the Caliphate and the Moorish empire in Spain; the growth of the papal power; the revival of letters, the touching episode of the last tribune Rienzi; the spirit of the Crusades—that wonderful movement of the West against the East; and the rise and fall of the Christian power in Jerusalem, fill his narrative with an interest in which Rome has little share. Yet never for a moment losing the clear view of his theme, he still fixes his attention on the fate of the empire, as it gradually lost one by one its vast dependencies—Africa, Italy, Gaul, the North and the East; until finally the empire of the Cæsars is contracted to a limit scarcely greater than was that of the kingdom of Romulus. In this fallen state Gibbon permits his subject to lose none of its interest. The capital of the East is still the point around which the history of the world revolves; and when, at length, that last refuge of the Roman name is about to be lost for ever, the story

grows in animation. We watch with alarm the rise of the Ottoman power: the city of the Cæsars trembles in its last decay: but for a moment it struggles and lives when surrounded by barbarous foes. In its last decline the shades of Scipio, of Julius, of Augustus, and of the Antonines, seem to hover around it lamenting over its doom. A gleam of Roman spirit marks its final siege; and, when the last vestige of the great fabric has disappeared, the historian returns with uncommon art, to paint the exact condition of the ancient capital, to number its ruins, and the tokens of its former splendor; and then lays down his pen for ever.

On the 27th of June, 1787, Gibbon wrote the last lines of the *Decline and Fall*. It was between eleven and twelve o'clock at night: the moon shone full over Lake Geneva, and the author, conscious that his work was over, stepped out into his garden, to give free course to his emotion. The air was soft and still, the sky serene, and all nature silent. He was filled with a mingled regret and satisfaction. His labors were, indeed, over; but he parted from them with sorrow. Henceforth his life was to be without an object, and his days without employment. Age, too, had crept over him since, in the confidence of manhood, he began his *History*: twenty years of the best period of his life were gone; and there now only remained for him to linger out the remainder in indolent expectation of its close. It was in sadness, therefore, rather than in triumph, that the great author saw his work finished; for, unhappily with him, it was the end of hope.

He now went over to England to publish the last volumes. During the four years of absence, he had not been ten miles from Lausanne, and the prospect of a journey affrighted him. He conquered this alarm and arrived in England in time to be present at an imposing spectacle. The trial of Warren Hastings was just opening, and Gibbon was one of the audience who listened to the eloquence of Burke and Sheridan, a circumstance that has been remembered by a great modern historian, in his picture of that striking scene. Gibbon found his old friends out of power. Lord North, blind and feeble, received him with delight, and there he most frequently visited. Everywhere the historian was received with marked civility. But he was soon engaged with his bookseller, and on his fifty-first anniversary, a period which he had himself selected, the fifth and sixth volumes appeared. The day was celebrated by a cheerful dinner at Mr. Cadell's house, and by some verses by Hayley, which Gibbon thought elegant. Hayley, with moderate abilities, had forced himself into notice by flattery and presumption. He evidently won the heart of Gibbon, who afterwards dined with him at his cottage at Eartham. "The Roman eagle," as Hayley affectedly called him, visited "the English sparrow."

His work was now established in fame and sold rapidly. Translations in French, Italian, and German constantly appeared; and however great may have been the author's expectations, they must have been more than fulfilled by his success.

In the midst of the gaiety and splendor of London,

Gibbon once more began to sigh for the peace of Lausanne. His English friends and admirers could not supply the place of those of his Swiss home; he parted from the Sheffield family, from Lord North, from his kind aunt, and his father's pious sister, and was soon on his way to the continent. On his arrival at his old home, he was shocked to find that a change had taken place which was irrevocable; that Deyverdun, the friend of his youth, was dying of a succession of apoplectic fits. He died, leaving to Gibbon the choice either of purchasing the house they had occupied, or of renting it for life. He chose the latter, and prepared to occupy the deserted house alone. Oppressed, however, with a sense of loneliness, he endeavored to supply his loss by forming a close and fraternal intimacy with the family of the Severys, consisting of a father, mother, a son and daughter. These well-informed and excellent people became to the solitary bachelor in the place of near relatives; they presided at his dinners, received his company, and amused his leisure by friendly attentions. Yet, at times he seems to have proposed a change in his mode of life; he would return to England; he even thought of marriage with some discreet, economical and well-bred lady, and then, as if affrighted at the idea of a wife, resolved to invite one of his nieces, the daughter of Sir Stanier Porten, to become the companion of his Swiss retreat. But none of these plans were ever perfected, and he remained for life a solitary bachelor, living among his books.

At length, the French Revolution breaking out disturbed his repose, and seemed about to involve even Switzerland in its horrors. Unlike most men of letters of the time, Gibbon never felt the least sympathy with this new political movement; in his History he is an ardent defender of liberty, but when democracy began to present itself to his mind in a living form, he shrank from it with disgust. He regretted the fall of the ancient French monarchy, and praises, in his diary, the political views and principles of Burke.

An army of democrats now crossed into Savoy, and Gibbon for a moment feared that he should be driven from his home; when they retired, Lausanne was filled with a crowd of the old nobility flying from the massacres of the temple. Among these came the Neckers, when the great banker was no longer safe in a country which had at one time received him as its savior. They were Gibbon's neighbors at Coppet, and lived in constant friendly intercourse; their daughter, afterwards the great De Stael, Gibbon knew only as a wild, gay, hoydenish girl, with none of her mother's beauty, but with an uncommonly active mind. Gibbon found that the enjoyment of a transient popularity and power had rendered both his friends impatient of its loss; even Susan Curchod had lost that repose of spirit which had marked her humble youth; and the chief object of the Neckers was now to make an advantageous match for the young Corinne. She was considered the greatest heiress in Europe, and was soon after married to the

Baron De Stael, an ambassador and a noble, but a husband who served to destroy the happiness of her life.

Gibbon, during these troubled moments, was cheered by a visit from the Sheffield family, with whom he had constantly corresponded: his own rare replies being received with unusual patience. They served to keep up his connection with his native country, and their visit seems to have turned his thoughts once more to England. His health continued equal, although he had frequent attacks of gout; but age came upon him sooner than upon those of stronger constitutions. At length Mr. Severy died; the son was in the army, and Gibbon was left alone. He was now engaged in writing his memoirs, which he mentioned in confidence to Lord Sheffield: one by one, as is necessary in life, his friends fell around him. Lady Sheffield died about this time, and Gibbon prepared for a final journey to his native country, partly with the hope of consoling the grief of his friend.

Lausanne had lost its attractions since the death of Deyverdun and Severy, and the terrors of impending revolution, increased Gibbon's eagerness to find refuge in a land unaffected by political changes. Meanwhile he labored slowly upon his memoirs, and projected a series of biographies of remarkable Englishmen, who, since the reign of Henry VIII., had excelled in arts, arms, the church, or state. This work he proposed to have adorned with engravings and portraits, by Boydell and Nicols, and hoped to amuse his leisure by an easy

and agreeable compilation. Of fame or money he now professed himself no longer ambitious: with their attainment they had lost their value.

In the spring of 1793, Gibbon resolved to set out on his journey to England. The disturbed state of the continent, and his own disordered frame, rendered the undertaking no pleasing prospect to one of his age and indolent habit. Having summoned up courage, accompanied by young Severy through the most dangerous part of the route, he passed safely through Germany; and although he heard at Frankfort the fire of the first cannon of the siege of Mayence, arrived without molestation in England, about the first week in June.

His stay in England was limited to a year: he did not know that he was never again to leave it. But his health was now fast declining. His dislike to motion increased, and he received his friends at home. His society was sought for by a distinguished circle of the nobility and the men of letters; and never were his spirits more cheerful or his conversation more charming. He still concealed from his friends the secret of his dangerous condition. At last, however, November 11th, 1793, he wrote to Lord Sheffield. "I must at length withdraw the veil before my state of health, though the naked truth may alarm you more than a fit of gout. For many years I have been afflicted with rupture; it now increases to a dangerous degree." Having thus disclosed the secret he had so long hidden, he finally submitted to an operation, which seemed at first

to give him relief; the disease, however, re-appeared: it was repeated; and a third followed not long after. During all this dangerous period he still remained cheerful; visited his friends when able; dined with Burke and Windham at Lord Loughborough's; and, as if resolved to hope, told his friends that he was good for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years. But the moment was near when no friends or company could any longer cheer him. He awoke after a night of pain, drank some brandy and water, and then desired his favorite servant to remain at his side. These were his last words; he lay for some time tranquil, his eyes half shut, and then ceased to breathe, 16th January, 1794.

Gibbon's death was like his life—calm, reserved, proud and silent. He uttered no complaint. He showed no symptom of regret: he gave no evidence of any longing for a future life, nor seems ever to have recurred to those modes of belief which had so influenced and occupied his intellect in youth.

By his will he left his fortune to the two children of his uncle Sir Stanier Porter, who were in moderate circumstances, apologizing for his apparent neglect of the children of his father's sister Lady Elliot. He left besides legacies to various friends. He was buried in Lord Sheffield's family burial-place, in Fletching, Sussex, with an epitaph by Dr. Parr, the famous scholar, who lauded his keen intellect, wide learning, and his equal disposition.

The character of Gibbon is not greatly to be praised.

He was selfish, vain, weak and proud. His tranquil nature admitted of no warm impulses, and no uncommon acts of goodness. He was satisfied with doing little harm, without seeking to add to the sum of human enjoyment. He loved dress and show, fine company and society, but he only enjoyed society so long as his own importance was acknowledged. Then he would tap his snuff-box, bend his uncouth body forward, stretch out his fore-finger, and pour forth a flood of language with all the animation of gratified vanity.

His purest feeling was his love of letters. He was evidently an ardent lover of knowledge, and no part of his life passed without some acquisition to his store. Yet with the single exception of Hume, he seems to have had little friendship for literary men. He evidently preferred men of fashion or of politics. He aided no rising authors, and left behind him no attached disciples. Living in the age and in the neighborhood of Johnson, Goldsmith, and Gray, he was never on more than speaking terms with either. Johnson no doubt repulsed him as an unbeliever, and repelled him from the circle over which he ruled. But for Hume, Gibbon had an unfailing veneration and even love. He delighted to call him master; he refused to be placed on the same level of renown. With Robertson he corresponded, but never felt for him that respect which he lavished upon his friend. He compliments him happily on his friendship for Hume, which had been formed by mutual regard in spite of common distrust, and Robertson replies that he

shall always remember his connection with Hume as one of the happy circumstances of his life.

His manner of study was never severe, and he gathered his great learning rather by directing all his labor to one theme than by the extent of the labor itself. He seldom read or studied at night, the usual field of the scholar, and of the day only occupied the morning. At Lausanne he rose at eight, took breakfast, and studied until two; the remainder of the day was passed without labor. Yet the immense erudition which he collected, shows how much may be gained by steadily devoting four or five hours each day to a well-defined subject.

His fortune, although not great, was always considerable. He sold his estate in England, preferring to invest his money in a manner that would give him less trouble. His expense of living at Lausanne was between £600 and £700 a year, with which he kept his house and carriage and entertained a large circle of friends. At Lausanne he was uncommonly popular and ruled with a kind of regal sway over its native society. He was esteemed, revered, and obeyed, and like Voltaire, he enlivened his Swiss retreat by his fondness for amusement.

He took a calm pleasure in nature and delighted in the view that opened from his windows over Lake Geneva. And in the History he has introduced many fine pictures of the dark German forests and the delicious groves of Antioch. To a reserved nature like his, which yielded only to the emotion of vanity, Nature often

presents uncommon attraction. With her his governing passion sleeps and he enjoys an egotistical tranquillity.

His conversation is represented as delightfully instructive. Lord Sheffield, in the language of friendship, can hardly praise it too highly. Coleman also records his sounding and ready periods. Yet upon every other subject than that of classical history his information was limited, and conversation requires general knowledge. Upon politics, religion, science, and art, Gibbon could have given no instruction, since on all these subjects he talked superficially. It was said of him that his mind could have been cut out of a corner of Burke's, a remark that no doubt arose from the superior variety and depth of Burke's conversation. The politician had a vast fund of knowledge upon all topics; Gibbon upon one. But the historian had his own immeasurable excellence which Burke could not hope to rival.

He had a singular dislike for letter-writing, and would permit months to pass in planning a letter to his friend Sheffield, before it was accomplished. He would procrastinate from day to day, then suddenly, with a violent effort, seize his pen, and produce a long or a short letter, but usually the latter. He left, however, many letters, through the long course of a lifetime, which Lord Sheffield has collected. The most affecting of them all, and the fullest of feeling, is that written to Lord Sheffield, on learning his aunt Kitty's death. He had written to her seldom, and for many months had totally neglected her. But just before the news of her death, he had sent

her a letter. He now, when it was of no avail, lamented that he should ever have thus neglected the nurse of his youth. Another, in a similar strain, is written to Lord Sheffield, on the death of his wife. It is a letter of consolation, yet not a sentiment of hope breaks the heaviness of regret. "If there be a future life," he writes, "she is happy." And this is all that he could offer. His gayer strain of correspondence is interesting and easy. But he wrote with unwillingness, and threw down his pen with pleasure. Some of his letters, however, to Madame Necker, and one or two in French to Deyverdun, are equal to those of Swift in delicacy of compliment, and have much of his ease and grace.

His letters, manners, and whole mode of life, were marked by a singular mannerism. He was formal, regular, and unchangeable. His language flowed, in conversation, in formal and sounding rhythm; his manners were studied and minutely refined. Even among his intimate friends he never threw off this rigid reserve. He called no friend, Dear Ned or Jack, but always Holroyd or Deyverdun. In their home at Lausanne, the same reserve prevailed between Deyverdun and Gibbon. They never entered each other's rooms without knocking thrice; they breakfasted in separate apartments. It is doubtful whether Gibbon ever unbent, even in his gayest moods, or ever threw aside that peculiar reserve which grew out of his mental conformation. He was evidently not one to pour out his whole heart into the heart of another. He concealed his disease

from his best friend, and told it only to his doctor. He showed his manuscript to no living person, and he hid, probably, in his inmost soul many sentiments, internal struggles, doubts, and terrors, which he was ashamed or unable to impart.

Like all men who live for fame, Gibbon became an egotist, thinking constantly what men were saying of him, rather than what he had given them cause to say. His fame came upon him suddenly, and for a time satisfied his desires. He finally grew weary and careless of it. But he was always conscious that he was an object of public observation, that the eyes of the world were upon him, and that his actions were marked and noticed. He had, therefore, a constant motive to self-restraint; and as the good opinion of others was what he chiefly lived for, he was careful to give no cause for reproach. He desired the esteem of the world rather than his own, and lived rigidly within the rules of worldly honor and good breeding.

In composing, he wrote freely and easily, after he had fixed his style. He sent the rough manuscript of his last volumes to the press without revision, just as they came from his hand: the first chapter of the first volume he re-wrote three times. His mind became finally so bent upon its subject, and so full of appropriate learning, that it moved mechanically in the exact path he wished it to pursue. He wrote with ease and pleasure, and he asserts that the happiest hours of his life were those spent upon his History. His authorities

he collected around him in a library of several thousand volumes, all tending to throw light on his favorite theme. He relates the pleasure with which, in youth, he exchanged twenty guineas for the *Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions*. The passion grew with years; and as the number of his books increased, they became more than ever his chosen companions. In leaving England he sold all his effects but his library, which, with great trouble and expense, he brought to Lausanne. His books were his only intimate friends, and his cold nature, fearful of the inconstancy of human affection, seemed to turn to these unchanging associates with new regard.

In his youth Gibbon's mind had been inclined to religion, both by nature as well as by study and observation; he devoted much time to the examination of the great questions of faith, and when convinced of the truth of Catholicism, had boldly avowed his conversion, and rejoiced in the inconveniences and punishment which it brought upon him. His convictions were plainly deep, if not lasting, and he rose to a height of faith which contrasts strangely with his final skepticism. He embraced without hesitation all the latest miracles of the church, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the holy oil, the invocation of saints, and the authority of the pope; and in the ardor of conversion, he hastened to throw himself at the feet of an obscure priest, to profess openly the sincerity of his belief. His reconversion, too, seems to have been equally sincere with his former change.

He read, reflected, and conversed with Mr. Pavilliard, until his first convictions vanished for ever; the holy oil and the papal supremacy became the objects of his peculiar scorn. He was now again a sincere Protestant, he attended regularly at the Calvinistic church, and finally joined in its most sacred rites. But from that moment we hear no more of his religious convictions. He still attended church, both at Lausanne and in England, but his interest in religion seems now to have wholly died out. From his nineteenth year he probably became a skeptic.

The idea of religion, however, was never long absent from his mind, but it was no longer a friendly one. Through all the long course of six volumes, he loses no opportunity to sneer and mock at the idea which perpetually followed him. A large portion of his History is made up of dissertations upon church questions and the progress of doctrinal disputes. In all these he never fails to present that view of the subject, which is least favorable to Christianity, and with an assumed respect, inflicts severe wounds in the tenderest points of orthodoxy. But he has no sympathy for the earnest spirit of the martyr, and sees nothing of that benevolence and purity which marked the early Christians. And the points upon which he chiefly dwells are those repulsive and disheartening features; a corrupted church, a grasping priesthood, and a world weakened and depopulated by the discord of rival sects.

As an author, Gibbon cannot be too highly praised.

He has all those qualities that most commend the historian to the judicious critic. He was laborious, honest, brilliant and acute. He had selected a subject the noblest in human history; to its treatment he brought almost every qualification necessary to perfect success. His literary ardor never flagged, his imagination ever expanded with the progress of his theme, his method was clear and simple, his learning satisfied the severest requirement.

In the power of generalization and of bringing into one view a whole era of remarkable events, no writer ever equalled him. His mind ranged over his wide and infinite subject, selecting, instinctively, the best points of view, and placing the reader where he could catch at a glance a whole splendid panorama. Gibbon compressed into six volumes a period of twelve or fourteen hundred years; but the period embraced is even less wonderful than the vast variety of its events. The world was passing through a series of convulsions; almost every year produced some new revolution, worthy of the pen of Thucydides. The Romans, Goths, Huns and Vandals, Turks, Moslems and Gauls, are but a few of that innumerable company of races of whom his narrative treats. He paints the swarthy Arab and the fair-faced Saxon, the forests of Germany, the steppes of Siberia, and the conquests of Ghengis Khan. Yet out all these distant and inharmonious elements, he produces a narration so well ordered and methodical that no want of clearness or confusion of subjects is anywhere apparent. He

relates nothing that is unimportant, and neglects little that deserves to be known. He draws together his facts with energy and skill, and produces a grand historical picture in which every line stands out in perfect relief.

This he was enabled to do, chiefly by the aid of a powerful imagination. Where Hume might have wandered away into some political or metaphysical speculation upon a series of events, Gibbon saw only the events themselves. Race after race, and revolution after revolution, arose before his fancy, not as subjects of mental disquisition, but as facts which he was to describe, and realities that were to be presented to the reader. He makes us familiar with the fierce Hun and the savage Avar, the cruel Tartar or the polished Saracen; and paints not only their actions but themselves, their dress manners, appearance, and nature. In delineating natural scenes he is also equally happy. The blue hills of Caledonia, the Hercynian forest, the groves of Antioch, or the solemn panorama of fallen Rome, are traced with no common skill. Although no trace is left of his having written any verses, yet there is much of the poetic in the character of his intellect. His fancy revelled in its splendid theme as that of Milton over Paradise. His History is not like that of Hume, a philosophical essay; nor like those of Robertson, a series of biography; but resembles rather a splendid epic, filled with the excitement of tragic action, and having for its hero the genius of falling Rome.

As he was a poet he fails as a philosopher. With

much pretence to philosophic power, there is yet little of real philosophical deduction in all his volumes. He teaches nothing and discovers nothing. Except in his inconclusive attack on the church, his work has no moral or philosophical purpose. It abounds in maxims and contrasts, antithesis and point. But no large views of intellectual or moral progress are to be derived from Gibbon's work. As a politician he contents himself with vague declamations in behalf of freedom, and in an opposing laudation of imperial despotism. He even forms no theory of the causes of the fall of Rome: he discovers no one principle capable of completing that great destruction. He is content with insinuating that Christianity aided in finishing the work which had been begun by luxury; that the discord of enraged sects, the fall of the old religion, and the decline of public virtue, hastened the event. Yet, it is natural to ask from the historian of the decline of Rome some better account of the causes of that decline, and to wish that he had possessed something more of philosophical power. Gibbon, however, simply presents facts; he leaves the reader to philosophize at will. This, perhaps, adds to the interest of his History, but it takes from its real value, and we still miss the just thinker amid its grand and glowing pictures, its sentiment and reflection, and the splendor of its varied learning.

One leading trait of his intellect was his sarcasm. He is the Juvenal of historians, and seems carried away into enthusiasm by no excellence of character.

The Antonines, it is true, awaken in him something like ardor; but it is forced and over-strained: and even his hero Julian comes from his hands a philosophical monster rather than a wise and useful man. He has no conception of perfect virtue, and was, therefore, wholly unable to paint it. Hence, therefore, arose his blindness to the real nature of the early Christians, and hence the admirable sketch he gives of Justinian or Augustus, the injustice he does to the gentle Nerva and the self-sacrificing Belisarius. As a painter of character, he caught rather the act than the motive. A cold sarcasm runs through all his History: he sneers at religion, mocks at all sincerity, and doubts the truth and honesty of all men. His skeptical turn of thought led him at length to attribute motives to others which he would have been highly offended had they applied them to himself.

Skepticism, however, in Gibbon seems rather to have been borrowed from others than the natural fruit of his own mind. Hume was a skeptic by nature. Gibbon by later influences. In literature, politics, or philosophy he was content to receive the opinions of others, rather than to make any inquiries of his own. His literary taste was founded upon French models; his politics he took from the ministerial benches; his philosophy he adopted from Hume.

His History shows little trace of any inquiry into the value or accuracy of his materials, except that he in general prefers a pagan authority to a Christian; praises

Procopius and decries Eusebius. He had nothing, however, of the active spirit of research which distinguishes a Niebuhr or an Arnold. He was content to take his materials as he found them, discussing now and then some nice questions of classical learning, comparing the testimony for or against some particular fact; but inventing no new theory, no original speculation, nor any new interpretation. The novelty of his History arises not from its new presentation of old facts, but from its happy combinations and arrangement, from its fine painting and easy flow, and from the free vein of thought, which shocks and engages the attention.

It is impossible to esteem too highly his learning; he was one of the most accurate of scholars, because he had given his whole life to a single subject. His command of the languages, however, was not great. He had only Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. He was forced to rely on translations for his knowledge of the Arab authors, and knew nothing of German nor ever seemed to care to learn it, although his friend Deyverdun could easily have become his teacher. Nor was his reading varied or extensive. But he had read every thing that related to his theme. All the studies of his youth since he first purchased the *Bibliothèque* of D'Herbelot, the inquiries of his later years, the vast range of reading with which he prepared himself for his entrance into Italy, his researches at London, and his studies at Lausanne, are all developed in his History. It is easy to trace through his memoirs, commonplace-

book, and his various dissertations and correspondence, the gradual and steady growth of his learning. He had a natural ease in acquiring languages, and learned Greek with scarcely an effort. He evidently loved to study a classical subject, to trace with Nardini the walks and porticoes of Rome, to follow Cluverius in his progress through Italy, to examine the received views of Horace or Cicero's journey, to inquire into the value of ancient weights and measures, and to review the decisions of others upon these, and all other points. He treats no question lightly, and avoids no labor necessary to ensure security. His History is fortified by quotations and references that render it invulnerable.

Of his learning he was evidently vain. His notes are often varied by allusions which might have been spared. He seems, however, anxious to strengthen himself by all the resources of erudition, as if conscious that he must be exposed to severe scrutiny, and should neglect no means of self defence. To his assailants he showed all the pride of superior strength. Whitaker, Harris, and Chelsum, he treats with proud contempt. He does not hesitate to declare that they are scarcely worthy of his notice ; that he notices them only to destroy them. His opponents at first hoped that his numerous references would prove the pretence of a superficial scholar ; they found that the gay and trivial man of fashion possessed a depth of learning which Oxford could not rival. Gibbon was vain of his velvet coat and of his wide learning ; but the latter vanity was the stronger, and his " Vindication "

shows with what zest he enjoyed the discomfiture of his assailants. This reply in fact set for ever at rest the question of his learning and his honesty. And even Johnson and his hostile set were awed into respect.

Gibbon's style, although universally read with eagerness and interest, has been almost as generally condemned. Later critics have discovered that it possesses almost every defect of which style is capable. Coleridge called it a luminous haze withholding rather than imparting thought, while foreigners particularly complain of its obscurity, and find it almost unintelligible. Gibbon's opponents in every age point to its strained and artificial brilliancy, its affected antithesis, and its want of an easy and unpremeditated flow ; nor can any reader who is familiar with the purer models of English literature, overlook its numerous faults in language and rhythm.

Yet the style of no author is more interesting or more popular. His grand and swelling periods fill the imagination and bear with them the interest of the reader. His language is novel, powerful, and peculiarly his own. He never sinks into weariness or descends from his lofty measured tread. Without the delicate beauties of Hume, he is yet more fitted to charm the casual reader and to carry away the popular applause ; while even the most practised critic will be struck by his thousand happy turns of expression, his subdued wit, his keen sarcasm, his general refinement, and his unfailing animation.

His style was evidently affected by the peculiar mental training through which he had passed. He had abandoned, at an early period of his life, his native tongue for that of France. He had learned to think and speak in a foreign dialect. His first work was written in French, and his first historical production, the History of the Swiss, was in the same language. When, therefore, perhaps at Hume's suggestion, he attempted to form for himself an English style, his language and rhythm partook largely of the dialect in which he had been so long versed. His models in writing had been Voltaire and Bossuet, rather than Addison and Swift. He had studied the French masters as the only successors of Tacitus and Livy. Nor could he well write a page of English without giving frequent evidence of his foreign education. His style teems with traces of the French classic school. His sounding periods, bordering on the bombastic, recall the dignified eloquence of Bossuet. His sarcasm and sneers remind one of Voltaire; his antithetic reflections, of the Grandeur of the Romans. He had evidently no mastery over the pure sources of the English, but supplied this want by translations and imitations from the French. His want of perspicuity, no doubt, arose from this circumstance. He both thought and argued clearly, but often when he would convey his meaning to the English reader, his language failed him and he was forced to hint at a fact or theory in that indefinite manner, which is so marked a trait of his style.

Yet, as a whole, Gibbon's style cannot be said to want perspicuity. Style embraces not only language but the method of arranging ideas. In this last circumstance Gibbon was peculiarly happy. No writer ever possessed a clearer idea of his subject, or could convey that idea more perfectly to his readers. His ideas succeed each other in an easy flow, and are definite, unclouded, and perspicuous. Each of his subjects of thought, or the divisions of his narrative, is laid out in an easy and graceful order. On no subject does he become confused or obscure. His mind never fails in clearness in the midst of the depths of theological controversy, or in the deeper depths of metaphysical distinctions. No where can be found a better account of the obscurest dogmas of the early sectaries; he grasps with ease the nicest distinctions, and unfolds them to the reader with a readiness that is often wonderful. The subjects of which he treats are, at times, the least clear in mental history; he brings them at once into perfect light. His historical narrative penetrates the confused mass of events of which he writes, with unfailing clearness and power. His acute mind never falters in distinctness, while unfolding the conflicting theories of the fathers, or pursuing the Gothic hordes in their distant and ill recorded wanderings; or when weaving his brilliant story from the dull and contradictory materials of which he was forced to make use. His style, if style be merely language, was obscure; if it be the arrangement and expression of thought, it was wonderfully perspicuous.

No writer was ever more concise. He treats each of the immense fields of history before him in a brief, thorough, and successful manner. He leaves little untold that it would be well to tell, and tells all that his authorities would permit of. Guizot has borne witness to the completeness as well as the accuracy of Gibbon's researches; and no one can have failed to notice with what singular art he has collected into one striking picture the chief points of each important theme. His account of the Germans, the Huns, the Arabs, or the Turks, shows the mastery of his genius; this was his peculiar power, and that trait of his intellect which best fitted him for the work he had undertaken. A diffuse writer like Robertson would have been lost amid the immense variety of his theme, would have wasted volumes in useless narrative, and weighed down the fancy by an endless succession of pictures. A superficial one, like Voltaire, must have omitted all that was new or valuable. But Gibbon pursued a happier course; from the vast fields of Roman history, he gathered only the most necessary details, and dwelt only on the most important eras.

Gibbon is of all the historians the most learned. His rivals, Hume and Robertson, by whose side he modestly refused to place himself, sink into insignificance before the vast range of his acquirements. But his learning is not his chief excellence; his highest was that he was suited exactly to his theme. By nature, by the inclination of his taste, by his fondness for learned disquisition,

by his clear method, by his grand and powerful style, by his imagination rising with his subject, by his accuracy and honesty of research, by his untiring labor, and above all by his single and unfaltering devotion to one absorbing theme, he was fitted above all men to become the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. On this field he can never have a rival. There may, perhaps, be written a history of England, possessing greater research and purer honesty, if not the simple and perfect manner of Hume ; but we can hope for no second History of the Decline and Fall of Rome. The subject is fully occupied, and like the Coliseum or the Pyramids, Gibbon's vast work must stand alone for ever.

ROBERT ORME.

THIS author, who has produced one of the most agreeable histories in the language, has not received that regard from posterity which his good taste and general accuracy have deserved. His works are in our day neglected or forgotten, and few readers, probably, are familiar with his pleasing narrative of the British exploits in India.

Orme was born in the country whose conquest he has described, at Arenjo, in Travancore. He was the son of Dr. Alexander Orme, a person of some intelligence. When he was two years old, his parent sent him to England, where he went to school at Harrow, had a private tutor, and pursued his studies with great labor and delight. Being destined for a mercantile life, he next became an accountant in the office of the African Company, where he showed as good a capacity for business as he had already done for study.

He next went to Calcutta, in 1742, to take a situation in a mercantile house, and, in 1743, was made writer in the Indian service. Five years later, he became a

factor of the company, and, in 1752, he distinguished himself by a memorial which he wrote on the subject of a police for Calcutta.

In 1753, he returned to England, where his reputation for a great acquaintance with Indian affairs, led the ministry to consult with him on those subjects, and in 1754 he was made a member of the council of Fort St. George. In this important office, and in the many dangers which then threatened the rising settlements of the English in India from the natives and the French, Orme was always a wise and decided counsellor. He was one of the first to distinguish and reward the uncommon abilities of Clive; and after the terrible massacre of the Black Hole of Calcutta, urged Clive's appointment to the command of the expedition, which was sent to avenge that crime. Orme was even nominated as successor to the presidency of Madras, but never obtained that elevation. He continued, however, the friend of the most eminent Indian generals, scholars, or rulers; with Clive, he retained through life a constant friendship; and he seems to have been generally esteemed by all his companions in the East.

Having fallen into bad health from the effects of the climate, he sailed from India, in 1758, for England, but was captured by a French vessel off the Cape, and came into Mauritius. Here he remained for some months a prisoner, and was then carried to France, where, for the first time, he saw Paris. He seems to have passed his time pleasantly in that capital, visiting the theatres and

galleries, and conversing with eminent men. At last, in October, 1760, he returned to England.

For many years Orme had been a diligent student of Indian antiquities, and had already drawn up a "General Idea of the Government and People of Indostan." But he now resolved to write an entertaining and reliable narrative of the exploits of the British in India. To this he prefixed a portion of the essay which he had already written on Indian antiquities.

Many circumstances fitted him for this labor. He had been born and had lived among the scenes of which he wrote; had been an eye-witness of the rapid growth of the British empire in the East, and had shared in those councils which had tended to enlarge and sustain it. He was the friend of most of the gallant men who had aided in driving out the French and in subduing the native princes; he knew Clive, and Lawrence, and Coote, and he was besides allowed by the India Company access to all the materials that lay in their power.

As a writer, he had formed his taste in the school of Robertson. He had some imagination, much clearness, a pure diction, and many agreeable qualities. He was truthful, accurate, and desirous in every particular to avoid exaggeration, and to prepare a reliable narrative of a series of remarkable events.

His subject was one of the most entertaining that could well be conceived of: the exploits of a small band of Englishmen, who had thrown themselves in the midst of a powerful nation, and conquered with ease

vast kingdoms that had endured for ages. It was one, too, that had a living interest for his contemporaries. Every day they saw adventurers returning from India, laden with wealth ravished from the natives, and raised to a sudden power and affluence that surprised their old comrades at home; and every day they heard rumors of those wonderful exploits which were performed in India by young Englishmen who had risen from the counter, and by raw recruits who suddenly started up great generals.

When, therefore, in 1763, after several years of labor, Orme published the first volume of his "History of the Military Transactions of the British in India from 1745," it was received with great applause. The India Company immediately made him their historiographer, with a salary of £400, and the public read eagerly his well-arranged narrative and pleasant style. He was now thrown into the society of the literary men of the time. Sir William Jones, and the historian Robertson, became his intimate friends; he was made Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1776, and formed a wide acquaintance among the eminent men of the day. Among others, General De Bussy, the French commander in the East, invited him to his country house, and there pointed out some errors in the History, which Orme was always eager to correct.

In 1792, Orme retired to Ealing, where he died, June, 1801. He was not grown wealthy, like most of his Indian contemporaries, but he lived in easy circum-

stances. His love of letters cheered the close of his life, and raised him to a position of influence and distinction.

The second volume of his "Military Transactions" appeared in 1775, bringing down his narrative to 1763. He also wrote Historical Fragments of the Mogul Power, during the reign of Aurengzebe. He was fond of making verses, was a good scholar, and late in life, after the publication of his History, employed himself with great assiduity in studying Latin and Greek, which he had too much neglected since his youth. He read over many classical authors, and was also much addicted to scientific pursuits.

Orme's style, manner, and subject seem to have delighted his contemporaries. Robertson and Sir William Jones unite in praising them highly, and Sterne speaks in graceful praise, in a letter to his daughter, of Mr. Orme's agreeable History. Although he was no philosopher, nor gifted with any remarkable learning or originality, he was honest, truthful, and sincere. Some of his descriptions, too, are written with a simplicity and natural power that remind one strongly of Herodotus. The exploits of Clive, the fate of the wicked Surajah Dowlah, and the dreadful picture of the famous Black Hole of Calcutta, are done in a manner that could hardly be surpassed.

Orme seems never, however, to have perceived the injustice of those wars in which his countrymen were engaged. Although evidently a man of tender feelings and of an excellent heart, he has no pity for the suffer-

ings of India, and is everywhere the defender of the cruel policy of the Company. He takes no clear view of the duties of the superior to the weaker race, nor draws from the narrative any philosophical or humane principles for the future guidance of English statesmen. He does little more than present a clear narrative of the conduct of the conquerors, and conceals their crimes in a halo of success.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

ENDEARED to the world by his genius and his good nature, there are few authors who are so well known to the public as Oliver Goldsmith; and as his life has so lately been illustrated by the careful researches of Mr. Foster and the inimitable skill of our own Irving, I can hardly regret that the following sketch will necessarily be short and imperfect. Yet, it would be unjust to omit Oliver Goldsmith's name altogether from the list of British Historians, since in no department of letters has his genius shone more clearly or purely than in that of history.

His father was a country curate at the time of Oliver's birth, living on £40 a year, in an old, rustic mansion, that stood near the banks of the river Inny. The country around was wild and rugged, and when he left the old house, soon after the poet's birth, it fell to decay, and was commonly believed to be haunted by fairies and hobgoblins.

The father removed to Lissoy, in the county of Westmeath, to the rectory of Kilkenny (West), and here he

possessed about seventy acres of land, besides an income of nearly £200. He was generous, improvident, good-natured and easy, the original of the amiable character of the Man in Black in the Citizen of the World.

Oliver, on being sent to the village school, showed soon a love for fairy legends and romantic narratives. His taste for poetry, too, soon showed itself, and at eight years old he began to write verses. His mother, a lady of respectable connections, and who seems to have had the chief control of the family, encouraged by his promising traits, resolved to give him an education which she hoped would enable him to improve the fortune of his family as well as his own.

As a boy Oliver, however, seems to have shown the same traits of disposition that marked him in later years. He was gay, good-humored, careless, and improvident. At school he was the leader of all the boyish sports; he was the first in a frolic, and usually encountered in his own person all its worst consequences. His appearance was far from attractive. He was short, ungainly in figure, his features thick and heavy, and his whole carriage awkward and uneasy. His vanity was always excessive; and while his ambition led him to sigh for distinction, his carelessness and indolence seemed constantly to sink him lower in the esteem of others.

Still, however, he learnt at school to translate Tacitus, and formed a lasting affection for the classic historians

and poets. His genius evidently directed him to the purest models of writings; and even in childhood he seems to have been forming his taste and refining his style.

His whole life abounds in a series of amusing anecdotes, which his biographers have carefully collected; and it is singular to notice how almost every one of the characters and the scenes dwelt upon in his writings, are transcribed from the experience of his own life. Goldsmith's plots, in his comedies, seem at first sight too improbable and farce-like to be admitted even in a play; yet they are, in fact, literally taken from adventures that happened to himself. And hardly a character is introduced into his poems or his novels that was not a skillful copy of some one of his early friends or relatives.

An amusing adventure happened to him before he left Lissoy for college, that gave rise, in after time, to "She Stoops to Conquer." Goldsmith was always fond of spending money at a tavern, when he was so fortunate as to possess any; and he then gratified his vanity by ordering about the waiters in peremptory tones, and spent lavishly what he could never afford. Once as he was travelling homeward, from some fruitless expedition, he stopped at evening at a village, and inquired of the first person he saw for the best house in the place. The gentleman, who was a humorist, amused at the appearance and manner of the strange-looking boy, resolved to have his joke, and directed him to the

house of Mr. Featherstone, where he was staying, having first informed him of his design. The owner was to play the part of innkeeper, and his family were to wait upon the stranger. At length Goldsmith entered with his usual swagger, when among his inferiors, and demanded a night's lodging. He gave his orders in a peremptory manner and spent money as if he were worth a fortune. At night he invited his landlord, his wife and daughter to take supper with him; called for a bottle of wine, and left orders when he went to bed for a hot cake at breakfast. In the morning, when he came down stairs, the joke was disclosed, and poor Goldsmith, all his importance gone, was left to make the best apology he was able. Mr. Featherstone, however, knew his father, and invited him, with Irish hospitality, to make him a longer visit.

Goldsmith's eldest brother, Henry, who had been at the University, and gained distinction as a scholar, was looked upon as the hope of the family; and he might easily, it was believed, rise to importance in the church—the profession he had chosen. But among the Goldsmiths there ran a common chord of simplicity and want of worldly tact. Henry, instead of living for ambition, gratified his simpler taste by marrying for love, and settling as a country curate, at £40 a year, besides acting as village schoolmaster.

Among his pupils was a young man of some fortune, who formed a secret attachment for Goldsmith's sister Catherine. They were privately married, to the great

displeasure of her unworldly father, who saw something dishonorable in a secret marriage, and who feared lest the world might think he had inveigled the young suitor into an improper connection. It is said that in his anger he uttered a wish that his daughter might prove childless; and when her three children afterwards died in infancy, the family remembered his unguarded words.

His mother still resolved to provide Oliver with a good education, he was sent up to Dublin, in June, 1747, to enter Trinity College as a sizar. To a person of Goldsmith's self-importance and excessive vanity, no situation could have been more unpleasant than that to which he was now driven by the limited means of his family. The sizar, in that day, was an inferior order of students, little raised above a servant. Goldsmith was expected to sweep the court, to carry dishes from the kitchen to the fellows' hall, and to wait for his own meal until every one else had dined. His dress was a coarse black gown and plain black cloth cap, which served to mark his inferior condition, and nothing could have been more painful to the pride of the poor student than was the whole duty and position of the sizar. It is said, too, that his tutor, a person of violent passions, who afterwards went mad, was accustomed to abuse and even beat him, in his fits of crazy humor.

While in this unpleasant position, a new misfortune fell upon Oliver, which added to his distresses. His father died in 1747, and his mother, obliged to leave her

own home for a new and inferior residence, could no longer, out of her own little support, afford him any assistance. In this strait, his relatives, and chiefly, probably, his kind uncle Contarine, sent him some money, while Goldsmith, when on the point of starving, could earn a few shillings by writing ballads for the street singers. It is said, that with all the anxiety of an author, he would follow the singers, and listen eagerly among the crowd to his own ballads.

On the 27th February, O. S., 1749, he received his bachelor's degree; but his indolence, carelessness, and dissipated career at college had already disappointed and alienated his friends. He returned, however, to live among them for two years, chiefly with his brother Henry, who was now living happy and beloved, with a fine family, upon his little income, the original of the amiable pastor in the "Deserted Village." Oliver, too, was now preparing to enter the church, but his manner of doing so is as amusing as any part of his writings. He spent his time at a club at Ballymahon tavern, and kept the whole country alive with his humor and frolic. When, at length, the time came for him to appear before the bishop, he dressed his ungainly figure in scarlet breeches, and was speedily rejected.

He now became tutor in a wealthy family, where, however, he soon contrived to quarrel with one of its members, and then set out on a ramble, with a horse and £30, to seek his fortune. But he came back to his friend without a shilling, mounted on a miserable pony,

and poorer than he had ever been before. He wrote to his mother that he had taken his passage for America, but while he was amusing himself on a party of pleasure, the ship had sailed, and his passage money was lost. The rest of his money he had given to a poor woman on his way home.

A consultation of the family was now held upon the case of Oliver, and it was decided he should study law. His uncle Contarine gave him £50, to enable him to enter the Temple, and Goldsmith set off with his usual high spirits. But no sooner had he reached Dublin than he fell in with some sharpers, who won all his money at play, and again he came back to his uncle Contarine, ashamed to see his mother, or even his kind brother Henry.

His uncle Contarine, apparently the most amiable of men, received the wanderer, and his cousin, Jane Contarine, amused and cheered him with her gaiety. He now passed his time in writing verses to his cousin and playing on the flute. But while he was thus spending his leisure, a relative, one Dean Goldsmith, the most eminent member of the family, visiting at his uncle's, recommended him to study physic. Goldsmith was delighted with the new idea, and once more full of hope prepared to go up to Edinburgh, to attend medical lectures.

To his sanguine disposition every new scheme at first promised unbounded success, and he had now no doubt that he was to become a physician of eminence, and

once more counted confidently on making his fortune. He overlooked the long years of toil and want and expectation, which must intervene between his hope and its realization; and he forgot that in all likelihood this realization might never come. Goldsmith was unfitted by nature for any professional employment, and having tried the church, law, and medicine, he finally became sensible of it.

By the kindness of his uncle Contarine, and other members of his family, he was enabled to collect money sufficient to carry him to Edinburgh, where he arrived in the autumn of 1752. Having taken his lodgings and left his trunk in his room, he set out to take a view of the city; but when he had finished his walk, he found that he had forgotten the number of his house and the name of his landlady. In this state of perplexity, he wandered about the streets for some time, unable to find a resting-place, until he fortunately met with the porter, who had carried his trunk, who directed him where to go.

As a medical student, he was gay, careless, sometimes in the depths of despair and then rising again to the excess of conviviality. He seems, with his usual fondness for distinguished company, to have found his way into the family of the Duke of Hamilton, where he was known as an amusing companion, and found a place at the table. But Goldsmith, who had always great pride and a suspicious, uneasy temperament, soon imagined that he was treated rather as a buffoon than an equal, and left the house in displeasure.

Since his misconduct at college and his various flights of folly, his mother had never been reconciled to him, and we find him, in a letter to one of his companions, professing that he bore her no ill-will. It is painful to think that they were never, even at the close of life, on good terms, and that when Goldsmith had risen to fame and comparative wealth, his mother never sympathized in the success of her undutiful son. She was disappointed that he had not made a judge or a dean, and never valued highly his success as an author.

After spending ten weeks at Edinburgh, Goldsmith, as usual, grew weary of the place, and wished to vary the scene, by visiting the continent. He would go to Leyden, to Paris, and there attend lectures. While indulging in these wild projects, it is only wonderful that he escaped starvation. His supplies from his friends could have been but of a trifling nature, and no sooner did he receive any money than he at once hastened to waste it at taverns and clubs. His improvidence grew with his years, and instead of learning to govern his desires, he every day was more and more a slave to caprice.

He had now £33, with a good store of clothes and linen, to carry him to France; an outfit that he thought amply sufficient. And after having been arrested as a recruit for the French army, and lying for some time in jail, with various other characteristic adventures, he sailed for Holland, where he remained for some time practising all his usual follies. He wasted his money in buying tulips for his uncle Contarine; he borrowed, he

attempted to teach English without knowing Dutch, he gambled and lost everything he had, and was only saved from starvation by the kindness of his friend Ellis, whom he had known at Edinburgh. And he finally, in 1755, set off for a tour of the continent, with one spare shirt, a flute, and a single guinea.

It was always Goldsmith's ambition to see eminent men and mingle in distinguished society, and in the midst of all his poverty, he seems to have been always able to gratify his taste. While in Paris, he was made acquainted with Voltaire, saw Madame Clairon, and foretold with clearness, that a great revolution was impending over France. He was in company with D'Alembert, Diderot, and all the philosophers of the day, and heard Fontenelle, then nearly an hundred years old, dispute with Voltaire, on some philosophical point, until three in the morning.

He was at one time travelling tutor to the son of an English pawnbroker, who had been bred an attorney, and who seems, according to Goldsmith's account, to have displayed all the failings commonly attributed to those professions in their highest degree. But Goldsmith's disposition was always hard to satisfy. His temper was hasty and his prudence small; and the pawnbroker's son was, probably, no worse than other men who grow suddenly rich.

At Padua, where he is said to have received his degree of physick, Goldsmith was on the verge of starvation, and in his extreme distress wrote to his friends in

Ireland for help, but they were hardly better off than himself, and he received no answer to his letters. How he escaped from want, or by whose charity he was relieved, it is impossible to say. We next find him turning towards England, and about to wander back to his home, as he had so often done before, disappointed in every scheme.

He travelled through France on foot, relying on his flute for his meals and lodging. He now led the merry troops along the banks of the Loire, and seems to have found in the cheerful temperament of the French peasantry something that resembled his own. Sometimes he gained a dinner or a night's lodging, by disputing in the colleges on scholastic points, and at others he paid for them with his merriest tunes. "Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow," he still found amusement in piping to the merry dancers of the Loire, and in forgetting the future in the cheerfulness that reigned around him.

When he landed in England, in 1756, his uncle Con-tarine was dead, to whose generosity he had so often appealed with success. And Goldsmith arrived in London, in the great capital, without an acquaintance.

Poor houseless wanderer! He had now reached the height of his wretchedness. He was often forced to lie down with beggars in Axe lane, and learned the extremity of those evils, which he was ever afterwards so eager to relieve.

He tried, however, various means of living. He was for some time a strolling actor, he then became usher to

a school, he worked in a laboratory, and soon after found a friend, Dr. Sleigh, whom he had known at Edinburgh as a fellow student, and who now did all for him that he was able. Goldsmith began to practice medicine among the poor, dressed himself in tarnished finery, and at last found a patron in a printer whom he had attended, who was employed by Richardson, the author of *Pamela*. This man procured Goldsmith to be appointed corrector of the press for Richardson, and he sometimes visited at Richardson's house, where he met Dr. Young and other literary men. He now wrote a tragedy which was never acted, and formed a scheme of going to decipher the written mountains of Arabia.

Goldsmith's brain was always teeming with projects, which he was wholly unfit to carry out; but he now became an assistant at Dr. Milner's academy, and soon after began to write for the *Monthly Review*, at a small remuneration. Griffith, the editor, a shrewd, close, worldly man, engaged Goldsmith to write each day from nine o'clock until two, without intermission, and besides altered his papers to suit his own taste in composition. This last proceeding was more than the sensitive author could bear, and Griffith, thinking him above his situation, dismissed him.

Golden visions were now playing before the poet's fancy, and he believed that his fortune was at last to be made. He had the offer to go as surgeon to a factory on the coast of Coromandel, with a large salary, and the prospect of considerable private practice. For a time

he indulged himself in the anticipation, but, finally, he was as usual disappointed. Either some one else got the appointment or the enterprise fell, and the company never carried out its plans.

His next object was to become hospital mate in the navy, and his examination was fixed for 21st December, 1758. He found, however, that he had no proper dress for this occasion, and he prevailed upon Griffith to give him an order upon a tailor for a suitable suit, to be worn only once and then returned. For this he engaged to write certain articles for the Review. He wore the clothes at the examination, where he was rejected for want of knowledge; and returned in despair to his lodgings. Here he was suddenly interrupted by the poor woman, his landlady, to whom he owed some rent, coming to him for money, with a pitiful story of her own destitute condition. Goldsmith, in an agony of pity and shame, sent the suit of clothes to the pawnbroker's, and paid her all he owed.

This was only a temporary relief, since he was now to settle with Griffith. A letter soon came from the editor demanding the suit of clothes, and Goldsmith was obliged to send him in answer the best apology he could devise. Griffith, however, would accept none of his excuses; he called him a knave and a sharper, and threatened to send him to prison, unless he made restitution of the borrowed garments.

Conscious of his own imprudence, if not guilt, poor Goldsmith was never in a worse predicament than now.

He had done wrong and even made himself liable to a criminal charge; nor had he any money or friends to aid him in his distress. At last, however, after much mental suffering and many threats on the part of Griffith, he was relieved on the promise of preparing several articles for the *Monthly Review*.

At this time (1759) he was living in Green Arbor Court, in a wretched room, in a house tenanted by the poorest class of people. Here, when Percy visited him, he had but one chair; and while the distinguished visitor was conversing with him, a little ragged girl knocked at the door, and said, "Please, sir, mother wishes to know if you will lend her a chamber-pot full of coals." His heart could never resist the appeal of want, and he often starved himself to save others from hunger.

While thinking of going to India, he had written his "Inquiry into the State of Learning," &c., with the hope of publishing it by subscription, and raising sufficient means to enable him to procure an outfit. When that design failed, he still brought out the "Inquiry," and obtained subscriptions among his friends in Ireland, who had already heard of his literary labors. It was published in March, 1759; and Griffith, who disliked his contributor while he made use of him, allowed a severe criticism upon it to be inserted in the *Review*.

But Goldsmith was now becoming known to publishers as a writer whose productions would sell. He wrote for the *Bee*, the *Busy-Body*, and the *Lady's*

Magazine; besides helping Smollett in the *British Magazine*, and writing children's tales for Newberry. He now began to make money; and, in 1760, moved to comfortable lodgings, and joined the Robin Hood Debating Society, where Burke was also a member.

The happiest circumstance of his life, however, was his introduction to Johnson on the 31st May, 1761. From that moment they continued to become better acquainted, and finally formed a friendship which lasted till Goldsmith died. There was much similarity in the lives and characters of these eminent men, which might well have attracted them to each other in lasting regard. Both had known the extremes of poverty, and had just risen above the regions of want. They were also both possessed of generous hearts, overflowing with sympathy for human wretchedness, while in their high intellectual attainments and uncommon genius they were raised above their generation, and could find no equals but each other.

Goldsmith was now thrown into a wide literary circle, to which belonged all the chief authors of the day. He was always fond of company, and his companionable talents and good heart won him friends that never ceased to like him. He was, also, too ready to give expensive entertainments; often inviting large parties to his dinners, among whom were Johnson, Reynolds, Langton, and many others. But the usual place of meeting of the authors of the day, where Johnson and Goldsmith were always found, were the dinner-parties

given by Davies, the bookseller, and his pretty wife. Here, in his little back-parlor, would meet Johnson, Garrick, Percy, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Warburton, and Foote, to discuss literature, and amuse themselves at ease with wit, good cheer, and argument. It was here that Foote proposed to introduce the great doctor among the characters of his popular satirical little theatre; and here Johnson let him know, through Davies, that he had prepared a thick oaken stick to take his revenge on the person of the satirist.

But Goldsmith was yet among the lesser lights of literature, and was hardly raised above a bookseller's hack. He wrote a "History of England, in a series of letters from a nobleman to his son," which he published anonymously, and which was attributed to Chesterfield and Lyttleton. In fact, no one could be insensible, who read his perfect production, that a genius of no common order was now making its way to fame.

In 1763, Goldsmith was introduced to Boswell, who was always envious of his favor with Johnson, and seems never to have been sensible of his real greatness. In his biography he loses no opportunity to paint Goldsmith as little more than a satellite of the great doctor, who borrowed his ideas, his taste, and even his fame, from the aid of his friend. Goldsmith, with much of the petty vanity of Boswell, was not unwilling to make him sensible of his superior influence with Johnson; and when they parted after their first meeting, he said to the biographer, exultingly, "I go to take tea with Miss

Williams." This favor was the highest that Johnson could bestow, and he dealt it out rarely only to his chosen intimates.

At Islington Goldsmith formed an acquaintance with Hogarth, and they long remained friends. He was now, too, always a guest at Sir Joshua Reynolds's dinner-parties, where he met many men eminent in rank and politics. Miss Reynolds used to call Goldsmith the ugliest man she knew, and he probably deserved the appellation. He was short, misshapen, and ungainly; his manners were never easy, as he was always seeking for admiration, and he dressed his sturdy figure in the gayest of colors. He wore bloom-colored velvets, a long sword, and indulged in all extravagance of the fashion. But while thus endeavoring to atone by dress for the deficiencies of nature, he only drew attention the more to his clumsy address and heavy features.

His spirits were always high in company; he could never restrain his habit of bursting into loud merriment, and was often led by his vanity and self-importance beyond the limits of good breeding. Yet, those who came to know him soon forgot these defects, in the sense of that genial nature which lay hidden beneath them.

When, in 1764, the famous Literary Club grew out of the dinners at Reynolds's and Davies's, Goldsmith was one of its first members. Here he met Johnson, Reynolds, Beauclerc, Langton, and Burke. The latter was

fond of playing practical jokes upon Goldsmith, which were not at all excusable, yet no one more valued his excellent heart than did Burke.

In the midst of all these flattering circumstances, however, Goldsmith still remained poor; and we soon after find him sending a note to Johnson, telling him that he was in great distress, and asking him to come to him. Johnson sent him a guinea, and came afterwards to his lodgings, where he learned that Goldsmith's landlady had arrested him for the rent. He found the poet with a bottle of wine before him, which he had purchased with the guinea, about to drown his sorrows in a bumper. Johnson at once put the cork in the bottle, and asked Goldsmith if he had no article of value which would produce him a sum of money. The author then reluctantly brought out the manuscript of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, which had long lain by him, but which he thought unworthy of publication. Having discovered its value on a slight perusal, Johnson carried it to the younger Newberry, who was persuaded to give him £60 for the copy. And Goldsmith was relieved from a jail.

Another work, which the author had long, out of modesty, withheld, but which was at once to raise him to the highest rank of poetry, was soon after published. In December, 1764, appeared the "*Traveller*." This poem gained a great success, and delighted every reader of its own day, as it has since done all who have followed. No doubt the kind aid of Johnson, and his influence in

literature, did much to give it immediate popularity; but so fine a work could in no age have failed to rise to its proper place in the public esteem. The poet, however, gained by his poem only £20.

When the "Traveller" had made his fame, Newberry published the "Vicar of Wakefield," which he had thought was not likely to have any sale. It at once charmed all readers, and Newberry made large profits out of a work which he had purchased from the author for a trifling sum.

Goldsmith was now an author of high rank, and was familiar with nobles, statesmen, and scholars. Lord Nugent, a rough, jovial, good-humored nobleman, became his friend, and often entertained him at his house. The Duke of Northumberland, too, offered to give him a place in the Irish establishment when he went as lord lieutenant to Ireland, but Goldsmith, with his usual generosity and self-sacrificing spirit, only begged the duke to do something for his brother Henry; and he made no use of this powerful friend.

In 1767, he brought out the "Good Natured Man" at Covent Garden, "the best comedy since the Provoked Husband," as Johnson pronounced it. It had, however, but moderate success, while a play called "False Delicacy," which Garrick produced in opposition to the "Good Natured Man," was followed by crowds, and produced large profits to Kelly, its author. Goldsmith, however, made £500 by his comedy, and at once, elated by prosperity, ran into new extravagance. He dressed

himself in a coat of Tyrian bloom, and wore garter blue silk breeches. He took fine rooms in the Temple, for the lease alone of which he paid £400. And he furnished his apartments with sofas, Wilton carpets, mirrors, and all the fashionable furniture of the day. His dress coat was lined with white silk, and trimmed with gold buttons; and he gave expensive suppers to his aristocratic acquaintances, which must soon have consumed his money and again plunged him deep in debt. Blackston, who occupied apartments beneath those of the poet, complained of the merriment and noise which he constantly kept up, at all hours of the night, and which interrupted the progress of the famous commentaries.

To gain means for this extravagance, Goldsmith now engaged to write his *History of Rome* for the booksellers, and was occupied during the years 1768-69 in composing the work. It is little more than a compilation from the commoner histories of Hooke and Echard; but was written in a manner more interesting and perfect than any historical work since Herodotus. Johnson pronounced it better than either Florus or Eutropius, but he did injustice to Goldsmith by comparing him with those inflated and tasteless writers.

Goldsmith was now receiving large sums of money from his publishers, but his foolish extravagance led him to spend far more than he received. His friends did not hesitate to reprove him for this conduct, and Johnson told him plainly all his faults. But nothing could

change his nature and he continued to plunge deeper in debt.

For his "History of Animated Nature," which he wrote soon after that of Rome, he received £800, and all his works sold rapidly, and more than satisfied his publishers.

With the ladies, notwithstanding his plain appearance, Goldsmith was very popular, and even Miss Reynolds, after the publication of the Traveller, allowed that he was no more ugly. His particular friends, however, were the two Miss Hornecks, with whom he spent much of his time, and whom he attended on a visit to Paris. He does not seem to have been much pleased with that capital, and probably his vanity was wounded by some want of attention on the part of the French authors. Neither Johnson nor Goldsmith seem ever to have attained any great reputation out of England until long after death.

In 1768, when the Royal Academy was formed under the auspices of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith was made professor of history in that institution, and Johnson professor of ancient literature. This office was merely an honorary one, and brought him no salary. In 1770, May 26, appeared the "Deserted Village," the most delightful poem in the language. It had an immense sale, and the name of Goldsmith was now familiar to a host of admirers, such as might well have satisfied his craving for renown.

At the first anniversary dinner of the Royal Academy,

in 1771, Goldsmith was present as professor of history, amid a crowd of all the distinguished and noble of the day. The conversation happening to turn upon Chatterton, he defended the authenticity of the poems of Rowley, and mentioned in the course of the argument, that the unhappy boy author had committed suicide in want and despair. Horace Walpole, who sat near, and who had so cruelly repulsed Chatterton's prayer for aid, now for the first time heard of his death. He blushed, turned pale, and endeavored to excuse himself by an untimely and unmeaning apology.

“She stoops to Conquer,” his last comedy, was brought out reluctantly by Colman, who foretold that it must fail, and even plotted against his own play, by discouraging the actors from taking their appointed parts. But the fame of the author, and the aid of his powerful friends, carried it on to great success. Goldsmith made a large sum by it, and the comedy has never ceased to be a favorite one on every stage.

It was about this time he wrote his “Retaliation,” one of the finest pieces of happy satire in the language. His friends were too apt to make Goldsmith their butt, and each of them, at a convivial meeting, wrote an epitaph upon him as though he were dead, some of which were painfully severe. Garrick was particularly caustic, and the kindest was Colman, who closed his verses with the lines :

“All mourn the poet, I lament the man.”

In reply, Goldsmith gave his clear and cutting retort. He condensed in a few lines the character of each of his critics, and painted Garrick, Burke, and Reynolds as they hardly cared to go down to posterity. From this time Goldsmith ceased to be a butt.

His next project to raise money, for his embarrassments increased with his years, was to edit a Dictionary of the Art and Sciences, to which Johnson should contribute an article on ethics, Reynolds one on painting, and Garrick another on the stage. This work, which he proposed to extend to a large size, he hoped to reap great profits from, but the booksellers finally refused to undertake it, fearing that the editor wanted the necessary steadiness for such an office. When this failed, Goldsmith proposed to publish his works by subscription, but this scheme was equally unfortunate.

Meanwhile the poet had become the fashionable author of the day. He was often at Mrs. Vesey's and Mrs. Montague's, at Garrick's and Thrale's. The last years of life were spent in constant dissipation. He was never satisfied unless at some convivial party, where he could lose the sense of his embarrassments in an artificial gaiety. At these resorts of fashion he appeared in a spring velvet coat, blue velvet small clothes, a costly sword that hung awkwardly beside him, and was followed by a servant in crimson livery.

But all this wastefulness and artificial mirth must have an end. His friends noticed that he was ill at ease in mind, and suspected his embarrassed situation; but

they could do nothing for him. Garrick kindly lent him considerable sums, and every one was willing to aid the distressed author. He was, however, so largely in debt that no hope remained for him of ever extricating himself; his health began to give way, his gay spirits sank for ever, and he died 4th April, 1774, at the early age of forty-five, confessing to his physician that "his mind was ill at ease."

No one was ever more sincerely lamented over by all that knew him well. Burke, who had been fond of making Goldsmith the subject of his practical jokes, when he heard of his death, burst into uncontrollable tears; and Reynolds, more calm, at the sad news, laid down his pencil and could paint no more that day. Johnson concealed his grief with his usual gloomy fortitude; while Kelly, Goldsmith's rival, the author of "False Delicacy," was seen, on the day of his funeral, weeping over his grave. These were distinguished mourners; but a more touching spectacle was witnessed at his lodgings, where all the miserable poor, whom he had been accustomed to aid, came to weep over his remains. They had lost their only friend and would never find another so tender-hearted.

It was intended to bury the poet with considerable pomp, and Lord Shelbourne, Lord Louth, Beauclerc, Reynolds, and others, were even designated as pall bearers; but when his friends found how deeply he was involved, they decided that a plain funeral would be more fitting. He was attended to the grave by the

Literary Club, with a few mourning carriages, and was laid in the Temple chapel. A marble slab was placed to his memory in Westminster Abbey, with the poet's bust sculptured upon it by Nollekins. The inscription was written in Latin by Dr. Johnson, who refused to compose it in English, notwithstanding the entreaties of the whole Literary Club. But the best epitaph for Goldsmith was Johnson's remark, when he heard of his death: "He was a great man."

Goldsmith's historical works were merely abridgments and easy compilations, in which he justly thought himself unusually happy. He wrote a History of England in 4 vols., 8vo.; another in a series of letters from a nobleman to his son; a History of Rome, 2 vols., 8vo.; a History of Greece, 2 vols., 8vo.; and his History of the Earth and Animated Nature in 8 vols. 8vo; besides delightful biographies of Bolingbroke, Parnell, and Voltaire. "He ornaments whatever he touches," said Johnson of him in his epitaph—a criticism, the justice of which has never been denied.

I cannot hope to give the reader a better idea of his histories than by extracting from Boswell's life the following review of them by Johnson.

"Whether we take Goldsmith as a poet, as a comic writer, or as an historian," said Johnson, "he stands in the first class." *Boswell*.—"An historian! my dear sir, you surely will not rank the compilation of the Roman History with the work of the other historians of the age." *Johnson*.—"Why, who are before him?" *Bos-*

well.—"Hume, Robertson, Lord Lyttleton!" *Johnson*.—"I have not read Hume; but, doubtless, Goldsmith's History is better than the verbiage of Robertson, or the foppery of Dalrymple." *Boswell*.—"Will you not admit the superiority of Robertson, in whose history we find such penetration, such painting?" *Johnson*.—"Sir, you must consider how that penetration and that painting are employed. It is not history, it is imagination. He who describes what he never saw draws from fancy. Robertson paints minds as Sir Joshua paints faces in a history piece; he imagines an heroic countenance. You must look upon Robertson's work as a romance, and try it by that standard. History it is not. Besides, sir, it is the great excellence of a writer to put into his book as much as his book will hold. Goldsmith has done this in his History. Now, Robertson might have put twice as much in his book. Robertson is like a man who has packed gold in wool; the wool takes up more room than the gold. No, sir, I always thought Robertson would be crushed under his own weight—would be buried under his own ornaments. Goldsmith tells you, shortly, all you want to know. Robertson detains you a great deal too long. No man will read Robertson's cumbrous detail a second time; but Goldsmith's plain narrative will please again and again. I would say to Robertson what an old tutor of a college said to one of his pupils, 'Read over your composition, and when you meet with a passage which you think particularly fine, strike it out.' Goldsmith's abridgment is better than

that of Lucius Florus or Eutropius; and I will venture to say, that if you compare him with Vertot in the same places of the Roman History, you will find that he excels Vertot. Sir, he has the art of compiling and of saying every thing he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a Natural History and will make it as entertaining as a Persian tale."

CHARLES JAMES FOX.

THROUGH all his political successes and the troubled scenes of a politician's life, Fox constantly aspired to become a historian; and, although his only historical work, the "History of the reign of James II.," was not published during his lifetime, and is at best an imperfect and unfinished sketch, it would hardly be proper to deny to its author that name which he so eagerly desired. He was always, however, a better debater than writer, and whenever he took up his pen to compose any labored production, he seemed to lose all that ardent manner and impulsive eloquence which made him so distinguished in the House of Commons.

The Foxes, for three generations, were a peculiar family, distinguished by many similarities in character and disposition. Sir Stephen Fox, the grandfather of Charles James, was master of the horse to Charles II. He was generous, pious, rich, and the founder of churches; a successful courtier and a good-natured man. The most remarkable circumstance of his life, however, was his late marriage, at the age of seventy-six, by

which he had two sons, both of whom afterward became peers.

The younger, Henry Fox, afterwards Lord Holland, and the father of the historian, was a statesman of the school of Walpole, who steadily supported the most corrupt and unfortunate administrations of his day. He was a man of moderate talent, and was chiefly renowned as a skillful manager of the House of Commons, where he was supposed to succeed by the lavish use of bribery and corruption. In reward of these services he was made paymaster of the forces, the most lucrative post in England, and the gains of which Fox was supposed to have increased to an unlimited extent by his shameless peculations. When he left office he had amassed a vast fortune, but was called by his countrymen "the public defaulter of uncounted millions." The city of London called for the sequestration of his property and his exclusion from the list of privy counselors; and Lord Holland, with his vast wealth and damaged character, formed a favorite subject for the fierce invectives of Junius.

Good-tempered, however, and self-satisfied, Fox cared but little for the opinion of his country, and having been rewarded with a peerage for his eminent services, passed the close of his life in watching the rising fame of his younger son. He had laid down for himself a maxim in education, that nature should never be controlled, and that all harshness and interference on the part of the parent were worse than useless. This system he adopted

with his children. He never sought to control their desires, or to check their extravagance, and he exposed them among the allurements of the world without a single effort to protect them from excess. We shall see in the following pages the effect of such a course of instruction.

Charles James, the younger son of Lord Holland, was born January 13, 1749. His mother was a daughter of the Duke of Richmond, and by her he was descended from Charles II., of England, and Henry IV., of France, both of whose dispositions he was thought, in some measure, to have inherited. He had the good-nature and easy temper of the Stuart, and the benevolence and kind feeling of Henry, while, as he grew up, he proved himself to have inherited other traits of their characters not so commendable. In fact, from infancy, he seems to have possessed a warm, generous, and impulsive temperament, and as he was laid under no restraint, he gratified every desire.

It is said that his father, when he was about fourteen, having taken him to Spa, gave him five guineas every night to play with; the source no doubt of his invincible attachment to gaming.

He studied at Westminster and Eton, where he mingled study with dissipation, and early impressed even his schoolfellows with a conviction of his superiority. His exercises, composed at intervals of hard labor in the midst of his excesses, were thought to show unusual ability, and his talent for speaking already

showed itself in his ready eloquence. In some verses written to him by the Earl of Carlisle, then a fellow scholar, he foretells with truth and foresight that Fox will one day rule in senates, and guide the opinions of his time.

From Eton he went to Oxford, where he gamed, studied, and made himself as remarkable by his talents as he did by his profuse expenditure. His father gave him an unlimited amount of money, and took no pains to check his wastefulness. Yet Fox, in his calmer hours, contrived to acquire some knowledge of Greek, read Homer and Longinus, and was afterwards able to recite whole passages from the former author with ease and propriety.

From Oxford, where he did not graduate, he travelled on the continent, and here his extravagance was such that even his father was finally forced to recall him. He was now seized with a new ambition, and wished to shine as the best dressed man in Europe. His red heels and his Paris cut velvet were displayed at all the courts of the continent, and he was very near becoming the most noted coxcomb of his day. In his restless ambition to excel, he aimed at every means of becoming distinguished ; but a new path was now to open to him more worthy of his powers.

His father, in order to wean him from his follies, obtained for him a seat in Parliament, when he was hardly nineteen. Here, in the year 1768, he found himself placed among the most eminent men of the day, and

he resolved at once, notwithstanding his youth, to win the respect and rival the performances of his associates. He began to speak upon every subject of debate, and gradually, by his ardent manner, fine voice, and uncommon natural gifts, soon rose to a leading position in the House. In accordance with the wishes of his father, rather than any inclination of his own, he took his place on the ministerial benches, and was hailed by Lord North as a valuable accession. Such was his influence, that in February, 1772, when he was under twenty-four, he was made a lord of the admiralty, and not long after was removed to the treasury.

His temper was sweet and winning, and, like his ancestor, Charles II., he seemed to please every one that he conversed with. He had no pride, hypocrisy, or envy: his manners were of childlike simplicity, and his disposition was so trustful and sincere, that he seems through life to have been the constant dupe of the artful and designing. He was possessed, too, of a strong spirit of independence, fearlessness, and daring, which ill fitted him to become the defender of a corrupt ministry; and, although he evidently loved Lord North as a friend, he soon came into open collision with him upon various points of policy.

As if judging him by the common standard of the time, and hoping by severity to reduce his young and ungovernable adherent to submission, Lord North, in 1784, caused Fox to be dismissed from the treasury board, with every mark of contempt. But this treat-

ment had the effect of rendering him for many years one of the firmest opponents of the ministry. Fox waited dutifully until his father died, before he openly changed his politics; and then commenced that long career of opposition, in which all his great faculties were schooled and matured.

The first subject upon which he was called to exercise his abilities was the treatment of the colonies, and that series of tyrannical acts by which the ministry sought to intimidate and oppress their countrymen who had settled in America. Fox, from nature inclined to freedom, unaccustomed to any species of restraint, and with a keen perception of the evil of attempting to rule freemen by force, began now to produce those wonderful attacks upon the ministerial policy which so charmed and astonished his contemporaries. Mild and gentle in his daily life and manners, yet in the House of Commons, when aroused by his subject, and inspired by revenge, disgust, and contempt, he assailed the feeble supporters of the crown with a vehemence and a just indignation, that seemed to recall all the fire of Demosthenes; and as he imitated the perfect simplicity of the Greek in his language and style, nothing interrupted the sharpness of his strokes, or the clearness of his rejoinders. "He was the most brilliant and successful debater the world ever saw," said Burke of him; and this opinion was shared even by his enemies.

His appearance, when aroused into eloquence, must

have been fine and striking. His black hair hung carelessly over his forehead, his eyes were dark and piercing; his brown complexion reminded the spectator of Charles II.; and his fine voice and animated gestures lent strength to everything he said. He was always careless of his dress in later life, seeming to be wholly absorbed in greater objects; but his form, air, and vehemence of manner, when excited in his favorite debate, lent something terrible to his appearance. Nor was this the mere artificial rage of the actor, but rather the ardent impulses of a generous nature, excited to a kind of madness by the ignorance and obstinacy with which it had to contend.

The folly and infatuation of the ministry offered an excellent subject for the brilliant debater. They had promised at the commencement of the war to lay America prostrate at their feet, but a succession of reverses attended all their efforts; their best laid plans failed; their finest armies were taken by the rebels, and their idle boasting signally rebuked by an endless series of disasters. All these subjects of ridicule and attack were skillfully seized upon by Fox, and became the themes of his finest efforts. He attacked the Boston Port Bill, one of the causes of the war, as a useless provocation, and he ridiculed the idea of conquering the Americans, while there lay behind them a vast wilderness to which they could fly for shelter, should they fail to resist the invaders. But he never believed that this would be necessary: he knew the power of freedom, and he fore-

told the complete discomfiture of the royal armies. The surrender of Burgoyne, the flight of Howe, and all the disasters of the royal party came one by one to prove the justness of his forebodings, and to quicken his assaults upon the courtiers.

Edmund Burke, now his chosen friend, was the most splendid speaker, as Fox was the finest debater of the time. Side by side the two friends pursued their long political contest, each using the faculty which he wielded best, and both finally sharing in a common triumph, marred, however by the conviction that the worst of their forebodings had proved true. The ministry fell only when the empire was finally divided, and the Englishman of America for ever separated from his fellow countrymen in Europe.

In 1779 he fought a duel with a Mr. Adam, a member of Parliament, who had taken offence at some personal reflection in his speeches. Although Fox persisted in disclaiming any personal dislike to his antagonist, he would not withdraw what he had said. At the place of meeting, when both were standing with their pistols prepared, Fox said to his opponent, "Sir, I have no quarrel with you; do you fire." Adam then fired, and wounded Fox. They afterwards exchanged shots, and the matter was settled.

In the meantime, while thus conspicuous as a politician, Fox had lost all the fortune that his father had amassed for him, in his own political career. The effects of his peculiar education now became apparent. Accus-

tomed to gratify every desire from early youth, he had long lost all control over his impulses. He gamed to a height that astonished the frequenters of White's: his simple and confiding nature made him the prey of designing women and cunning men. He was the most notorious spendthrift of the age. By 1780 he had wasted the whole of his fortune of over £100,000, which he had received from his father, or by the death of his elder brother, and was often in want of small sums of money. He was beset by Jews, bailiffs, and creditors; and Horace Walpole, on visiting him on one occasion, found all his furniture, and even his kitchen utensils, sold out, and being removed under execution. He had inherited a beautiful house at Kingsgate, in the Isle of Thanet, built at a great expense, and with uncommon taste and elegance, after the manner of Cicero's villa at Baiæ, but this he was forced to sell, as well as a lucrative post in Ireland, which had descended to him from his brother.

In this extremity, however, Fox never lost his good humor, but when he grew poor, consoled himself by writing an "Invocation to Poverty." She had already come without invocation, but seldom had found a more philosophic wooer. He never sought to hide his own failings, but always lamented them as things that were inevitable. In fact, his generous, careless, and philosophic character seem to have endeared him to his friends and the people, and although perhaps Dr. Price alluded to him in the pulpit as a spendrift who sought

to rule the expenditure of the nation, yet the voters of Westminster, all the ladies, and the great body of the people, were always on the side of Fox.

When the ministry of Lord North fell, in 1782, Fox was made secretary of foreign affairs, and at once set about concluding a peace with the various hostile powers. But the negotiations were interrupted by the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, and when Lord Shelburne took the head of the ministry, Burke, Fox, and several of their associates, thought proper to resign.

In April, 1782, however, Fox again came into power, in the famous coalition which he formed with his old friend and enemy, Lord North, and much odium was heaped upon Burke and himself for their share in this transaction. Whatever may have been the means by which they rose to office, the object for which they employed their power was one of the noblest they could have chosen. The chief measure of the new ministry, was Mr. Fox's India bill, designed to remedy the abuses of the administration of India. The good heart of Fox was touched by the sufferings of the millions of helpless natives, who now groaned beneath the rule of an exacting mercantile company, and he resolved, that as he possessed the opportunity, he would provide for them an effectual protection. In this design he was aided by Burke, whose heart had long bled for the sufferings of humanity in India.

This purpose Fox proposed to accomplish, by removing the control of India from the company, to a board

of directors, who should be more under the influence of the crown, than had been the former government. And he hoped to provide such checks upon the rapacity of the servants of the company, as should prevent those cruel exactions which had lately desolated whole districts of India. But in so great a change he could hardly expect to be without violent opposition. In fact, a more dangerous measure could not have been discussed by the new ministry, than was this "India bill." Fox, however, carried it successfully through the House, by the aid of all the ministerial influence, and even gained a first reading in the House of Lords, but at this period the royal influence was brought to bear upon the peers, the India company renewed their clamor against the measure, corruption, threats, and every species of political intrigue were arrayed against it, and finally it was defeated in the Lords by a considerable majority. The ministry fell, and Fox, for many years, was destined to hold no office under government, but to pursue an unvarying task of useless opposition.

On this occasion, however, Burke in reviewing the character and objects of his friend, delivered a panegric upon Fox, one of the finest that was ever heard, and it must have been no little satisfaction to the fallen statetsmen, that one at least of his contemporaries, and he the greatest and purest, could so well appreciate his motives. Burke dwelt in this speech on the wonderful genius of his friend for politics, on his eloquence, unequalled in debate since Demosthenes, and on that pure and noble

sentiment with which he had placed all his official influence on the side of suffering India. He paints Fox as longing to become one of the benefactors of mankind, by saving so large a portion of his race from oppression, and shows the purity of his benevolence, and the magnanimity of his designs. He alludes, too, to his friend's faults, but asserts that hypocrisy, pride, and envy, had no part in his noble nature, and that his faults arose chiefly from his simple and childlike sincerity, which left him the prey of artful and designing men. Burke had evidently a just conception of the character of his friend, and amid all his failings, saw that generosity of disposition which raised him above his contemporaries.

When Parliament was dissolved, Fox stood for Westminster, while the whole influence of the court and ministry were arrayed against him. All the ancient whig families, however, supported him, and particularly the ladies, among whom the Duchess of Devonshire took the chief part. He was elected by a majority of several hundred, but the courtiers, on some pretence, altogether unfounded, demanded a scrutiny of the votes, and he entered Parliament for a Scotch borough. This matter, apparently so trifling, the ministry pressed with all their influence, as if one of the chief objects of their administration was to prevent Fox from sitting for Westminster. The chief bailiff, however, who had ordered the scrutiny, was afterwards fined £2,000, by a jury in the Court of Common Pleas, and Fox finally triumphed.

The nation was now divided into two parties; that of

Fox, and that of the king. Dr. Johnson, who had been won by the engaging manners of Fox, notwithstanding his whiggish principles, preferred the popular favorite to the royal ministry. "I am for the king," he said, "against Fox; but I am for Fox against Pitt." When Boswell asked him if he had really made this remark, he replied, "Yes, sir; the king is my master, but I do not know Pitt, and Fox is my friend."

"Fox," he added, "is an extraordinary man—here is a man who has divided a kingdom with Cæsar, so that it was a doubt which the nation should be ruled by, the sceptre of George Third, or the tongue of Mr. Fox."

In the impeachment of Warren Hastings, Fox aided Burke in the common cause of avenging the millions of India, and much of the happy influence of that famous trial is due to his labors.

When, in 1788, the king became insane, the whigs thought they saw an opportunity of snatching the power from Pitt, by placing the Prince of Wales on the throne. Fox took the ground that immediately upon the incapacity of the occupant of the throne, the heir apparent became regent by indefeasible right. While Pitt, who was interested in excluding the heir, contended that the people in such a case must select their sovereign anew, and decide who should reign. He ridiculed the idea of any indefeasible right, and when he heard the arguments of Fox, cried out to his friends, with every mark of exultation, "Now, I'll unwhig the gentleman."

The prince was, personally, unpopular, and his con-

duct towards his father, in this sad circumstance, did not tend to recommend him to the people. He showed an uncommon eagerness to grasp the sceptre, so long as the king remained insane, and when he recovered, endeavored to excuse his conduct by a subtle and insincere defence. He was already in debt to a large extent, and was suspected of having married Mrs. Fitzherbet, by a Catholic ceremony.

Happily for Pitt, the king returned to his senses, and the whole nation rejoiced that they had not yet fallen into the hands of his dissolute and heartless son.

Fox's political principles had always, since the American Revolution, been inclined towards republicanism. He was the friend of popular rule; he believed that the people had sufficient intelligence and virtue to be trusted with power, and that the best government was a free one. Unlike Burke, who leaned towards the splendor of courts and the sentiment of loyalty, Fox hated kings, and had little love for aristocracy or wealth. He had long looked to America for instruction and example, and had studied with interest the progress of that new people in freedom and greatness. But the opening of the Revolution in France soon engaged all his attention, and he now began to hope that the principles which he had so long advocated were about to triumph, not only abroad but in England.

His letters to his nephew, Lord Holland, in the memoirs lately edited by Lord John Russell, commence with the year 1791, May 26th, and bring into clear light

his peculiar views and principles. From the first, he rejoiced in the efforts of the French at self-government, excused their faults, lamented their failures, and still looked forward with hope, even when the massacres of the Temple, and the execution of the king, had shocked his humanity and touched his heart. When the allied armies cross the French frontier to crush the germs of freedom, he trembles, and when they fly before the energy of the republicans, he exults in the misfortunes of the royalists. He wishes that the French were more like "our old friends the Americans;" he defends the Jacobites, although he denounces their massacres, or rather seeks to impute them to the violence of the mob, and he denounces the policy of Pitt as detestable, when that minister is about to attempt the subjugation of the revolutionists, by the united arms of England, Austria, and Russia.

Fox and Burke were now to separate for ever, and Fox not only calls Burke's splendid attacks upon the Revolution "mere madness," but praises a pamphlet, which had been written against his old friend by "one Mackintosh." This was the "*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*," with which Sir James made his first appearance in literature, and gained at once a general renown.

His letters at this period are full of the name of Mrs. Armistead, a lady with whom he lived, and who afterwards became his wife. He was writing to his nephew, a young man just forming his character, yet he does not hesitate to send Mrs. Armistead's "love to Henry," to

assure him how much she praises and admires him, and to invite him to meet Mrs. Armistead and himself at supper. There is a want of delicacy as well as prudence in this part of his conduct, and he seems always to have been indifferent to the restraints of social propriety.

In 1791, he aided Wilberforce in his efforts to break up the slave trade; his heart, always tender, was easily touched by the narrative of the horrors of slavery; and his speech delivered on that occasion is one of the best of his performances. In his clear and artless eloquence he paints the cruelties of the master and the miseries of the slave, and shows of what fearful deeds men are capable when placed in the control of the lives and persons of their fellows. In the first division of the House, however, notwithstanding this eloquent appeal, there followed Fox and Wilberforce only an insignificant minority, so slowly did truth force itself upon the minds of the nation.

During all the struggles of Pitt, with the revolution abroad and disunion at home, Fox, with diminished popularity and influence, continued to assail the conduct of the ministry on every point, and to defend the rights of the people. He and his followers were looked upon as disorganizers and radicals, who would have been glad to see the monarchy overthrown, and a republic reared in its place. Fox joined various leagues for the purpose of political reforms; and at length, finding his opposition useless in the House of Commons, began, in 1797, to cease attending in that body.

The succession of misfortunes that attended the ministry of Pitt seemed to justify the conduct of his opponent: his plans for humbling France were wholly disconcerted: the nation was covered with mortification and disaster; and finally the inflexible minister himself died of shame and labor, after the defeat of the allies at Austerlitz.

In 1802, Fox had travelled into France to make collections for his History, and there met Napoleon. Fond of every species of genius, he had been charmed and impressed by that wonderful character; and there grew up a kind of friendship between them, founded upon mutual respect, which Fox transmitted to his descendants. The good feeling of Holland House was afterwards felt by Napoleon in St. Helena.

Pitt died in 1806, in a disastrous condition of the empire that might well have broken his proud and patriotic heart. The nation was now inclined to pacific measures; and Fox was secretary of foreign affairs in the new ministry, commissioned once more to negotiate a general peace. His return to power was marked by an act of political generosity. A person had introduced himself to Fox with a project for the assassination of Napoleon: the minister, indignant, called upon the doorkeepers to seize him, and gave him up to the police. He immediately afterwards wrote a noble letter to Talleyrand, relating the proposal he had just received, and offered to place the means of prosecuting

the author of it at the disposal of that minister, should he think it worthy of his attention.

Napoleon, struck by this generous act, directed Talleyrand to write to Fox, that he recognized his noble nature in the offer, and that he took it as the omen of what he might expect from the new ministry. Fox replied by a cordial note, frankly offering peace. Napoleon was charmed by his sincerity and good-feeling, and the evident admiration Fox did not hesitate to display for the chief enemy of England.

But death, which had already borne away Pitt from the midst of his misfortunes, now struck down his ancient rival in the midst of hopes. He died of a dropsy, September 13th, 1806, in the 58th year of his age. He had always been a favorite with all classes of the people; and his funeral was attended by a great multitude of the noble, the middle classes, and the poor. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

His character was one of those that attract general regard. Although he lived wholly without restraint, and gratified every desire, yet happily he had many noble and generous impulses which preserved him from the selfishness of sensuality and vice. He was a spendthrift, a gambler, a libertine, and apparently had no single principle of morality to guide his conduct; but such was the sweetness of his temper, the generosity of his disposition, and the magnanimity of all his conduct, that he was loved, honored, and esteemed by the purest

men of his time. Burke loved him as his chosen friend ; with Wilberforce he labored side by side in the cause of humanity ; and no one ever thought of judging him by the stricter standard of conduct which they applied to other men.

His manners were so simple, that they seemed those of a child : he was natural, artless, and easily pleased. He was so sincere, that he never suspected others of meaning less than they said ; so gentle, that he submitted to almost every control. Yet, in his political principles he was firm and unbending ; no emotions of ambition ever took him from the path of honor, and no opposition terrified or discouraged him. In early youth he met the best debaters of the House with composure ; and when he spoke the fire and energy of his manner startled, and even terrified his opponents.

Although the political career of Fox may appear at first sight to have been unfortunate, and to have been little more than a useless round of opposition, yet no man has had a greater influence upon the destiny of his country.

By his ardor and perseverance in liberal principles, he gave to the whig party of England its distinguishing traits. He directed it to a course of political reform in which all the noblest feelings of his nature were developed. In 1773 he supported, and no doubt originated, the first motion of Mr. (afterwards Earl) Grey, for constitutional reform, a measure that was not finally adopted until 1832. He was the first to stand by Wil-

berforce in his effort to abolish the slave trade; and he was the steady supporter of Burke in all his labors in the cause of India.

These principles Fox bequeathed not only to his party but to his own family. He transmitted to his nephew, Lord Holland, all his own liberal views in politics, as well as his elevated taste for literature. Holland House, the famous centre of political and literary excellence, for the first half of the present century, reflected through all its career the character and influence of Fox. His nephew seems to have inherited the same amiable temper, an equal love for letters, and the same noble desire to aid in the progress of freedom. Few men, in fact, have had a happier influence upon the interests of their country and of humanity than Fox; and it is impossible to estimate the great good that he accomplished by his apparently unsuccessful and ill-rewarded efforts.

The latter part of his life from 1797, was chiefly passed at St. Ann's Hill, in retirement and repose. There he hoped to cultivate his literary taste, and to produce some work which might repay him by its success, for his failure in the field of politics. Fox had a correct taste, a good judgment, and had read more than could well have been expected from an active political leader. He now meditated various literary projects, an edition of Dryden, a Defence of Racine and the French stage, and a disquisition to refute the errors and false coloring of Hume. Finally, however, he resolved to compose the History of the Revolution of 1688, a period which would give

scope for all those political speculations and principles which he had so long maintained. He thought Hume's partiality for kings and princes "intolerable and ridiculous," and he hoped that a true and careful narrative would refute for ever the theories of that great enemy of the whigs.

His researches were wide and laborious. He wrote to Lord Lauderdale at Paris to send him collections of papers, and he went himself to that city to examine its numerous manuscripts. He used Barillon's correspondence, with which he professed himself disappointed, and seems to have labored upon this work with uncommon perseverance. The manuscript was carefully written out by Mrs. Fox (Mrs. Armistead), and Fox probably dictated to her or to some other amanuensis, as he would have done a debate.

His History as he has left it, is simply a disquisition on English politics, from the time of Henry VII. to the death of Charles II., together with a narrative of the reign of James II. until the death of Monmouth. Here he paused, probably from the constant interruption of business, indolence, or pleasure. He evidently wanted sufficient steadiness to produce any laborious work, and the whole result of his inquiries are this imperfect fragment.

The History has good sense, a clear manner, and an evident sincerity and honesty of execution; but it is wholly wanting in imagination, interest, and grace. Fox's style is that of a debater, plain, pointed, and

inharmonious. His language does not flow easily, and wants the delicate graces of the fine writer. His narrative is sometimes interesting, on account of its clearness, but something more than simplicity is needed, to keep up for a long period the attention of the reader. And Fox must be remembered rather as one who desired to become an historian, than as having given any proofs of historical power.

FRAGMENTARY HISTORIANS.

MORE.—BACON.—MILTON.—SWIFT.

It would hardly be proper to close this volume without noticing the fragmentary histories of several great writers, who were never able to perfect their historical productions, but whose names add lustre to the long list of those who have cultivated this species of writing. In fact, such have been the charms of history, that few eminent authors have escaped the desire to become historians; and poets like Milton, philosophers like Bacon, and humorists like Swift and More, have each essayed, with imperfect success, to excel in the art.

Sir THOMAS MORE, the son of a judge of the King's Bench, was born in London, 1480. He was educated in ease and affluence, with all the advantages that could be gained from the schools and colleges of his day. He became an excellent scholar, a pleasing writer, and

having followed his father's profession, the law, was made lord chancellor by Henry VIII., on the fall of Wolsey. From early youth, he was distinguished for his fine taste, eloquence and genius, and was looked upon with hope, as one who would prove of signal service to his country and his age.

These expectations were not disappointed. More was one of the first to oppose the progress of the royal power in the constitution, and set the unusual example of denouncing, with great eloquence, in the House of Commons, the demands of Henry VII. for a great and oppressive taxation. He, in consequence, fell under the displeasure of that king. But when he died, and Henry VIII. ascended the throne, More was introduced at court by Wolsey, and passed through several high offices—was speaker of the House of Commons, and finally received the great seal.

The character of More's intellect was singular. He was a humorist, who viewed every change of fortune with a smile. He was jocular in conversation, and seldom spoke, even upon the gravest subjects, without some witty allusion or humorous turn of expression. Yet this trait, which might have passed for levity in other men, flowed chiefly from the greatness of his mind, which enabled him to look with composure on the most serious evils of life.

Nor did this love of humor ever detract from his real wisdom, or lose him the respect of the gravest and wisest of his contemporaries. No man was ever a more

sincere lover of truth, or more firm and self-sacrificing in his devotion to its support. Whatever he thought to be right he maintained at the risk of all his prospects, and even of his life. He opposed the tyranny of Henry VII., the rapacity of Wolsey, and the licentiousness of Henry VIII.; and he finally suffered death rather than yield his religion to the commands of the tyrannical king.

Gentle, amiable, modest, fond of retirement, and careless of luxury or power, few characters in history seem purer than that of More. In the midst of his high offices, and the various opportunities of aggrandizement offered him by his influence at court, he voluntarily remained poor, and endeavored to impress his own unworldliness upon his family and friends. And when he was finally sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered on Tower Hill, in July, 1585, he closed his life in poverty, with humorous conversation and frequent sallies of wit.

Not all the solicitations of Henry VIII., who really esteemed while he destroyed him, nor the more powerful influence of the wise reformer, Cranmer, could wean More from his faith in the papacy, and his resolution to adhere to the Romish church. And it is said that when lord chancellor, such was the excess of his religious zeal, that he was accustomed to have the reformers whipped in his garden, in order to bring them back to the true faith. This singular trait in his character seems well attested; and gentle as he was in all

civil matters, in religious affairs he countenanced, and even practised persecution.

He wrote various works in English and Latin, of which the *Utopia*, his philosophical romance, is the most celebrated. The *History of Richard III.*, written about the year 1516, is natural and interesting: he wrote it first in English and then in Latin; but having never completed his design, it remains only an unfinished fragment. His grandson, Cresacre More, in his biography of Sir Thomas, calls the history "incomparable," and asserts that the English edition was corrupted and vitiated by many errors. More's works were greatly admired by his contemporaries, and long remained the best models of English prose writing. His *Utopia* was translated from the Latin by Burnet; and his *History of Richard III.* is still read with pleasure, and new editions published.

The next of these fragmentary historians, Lord BACON, was born, 1561, and died, 1626, his life shortened, no doubt, by the ardor of his studies, no less than by the misfortunes and disgrace that fell upon his later years. Bacon unhappily was born to a great genius, but with no clear idea of moral excellence. He seems to have prized the intellectual too highly, and to have thought that any deficiency of morals would be forgotten in the splendor of his mental glory. Without any just principles of conduct, and with none of the magnanimity of Sir Thomas More, he sacrificed his friends,

his virtue, and his higher feelings, to the claims of a low self interest. He was fond of pomp, dress, fine houses, and wordly show, and even in the moment of his disgrace, thought to impose upon the minds of men, by making his journeys attended by a long train of followers, and losing none of his usual magnificence. He was wasteful and extravagant to excess; he was more than once arrested for debt; he was driven to accept bribes in order to maintain his princely state. He was the loudest in accusing Essex, the chief author of his fortune, and the most generous of friends; he encouraged the arbitrary policy of Elizabeth, and James, while Coke was sustaining the rights of the subject; and he completed his degradation, by his assiduous flattery of the dissolute and unprincipled Buckingham.

It becomes the more wonderful, therefore, that Bacon, an object of such deserved contempt, should have risen to such a lofty position in the esteem of posterity, and that by the greatness of genius, he has made it the interest, and the desire of the world, to conceal or palliate his faults. As a man, therefore, Bacon is forgotten, and he only lives as some grand intellectual agent, who has had the charge of effecting a great mental revolution, and whose power is felt in every step of human progress.

When in 1621, after his fall, Bacon retired to Gorham-bury, he formed the design of writing the History of the reign of Henry VII., and probably, also, that of a complete History of England. But of the last under-

taking, he left but a brief fragment, which commences with a sketch of the state of England after the death of Henry VIII., and gives some particulars of the character of Elizabeth. The History of Henry VII., however, he soon completed, and in 1622 it was published with a dedication to Prince Charles. He sent presentation copies to the king, Buckingham the Queen of Bohemia, and the lord keeper; and was evidently pleased with his work, and confident of its value.

The History was written in an interesting manner, and was widely read. It was long thought the best historical work in the language, and until Hume, no writer had produced so clear and entertaining a narrative from English History.

Henry VII., the ancestor of James I., and the founder of the family that now sat on the throne, Bacon praises with all the zeal of a courtier. He is religious, noble, wise and valorous, and all his tyranny, cruelty, and selfishness, are forgotten in the eloquent panegyric of the historian.

The theme was an interesting one. Henry VII. had brought peace to England, and closed for ever the wars of the two roses. He was energetic and prudent, brave and intelligent; and his reign was marked by several episodes, which Bacon has treated with much skill and power. He relates the story of Lambert Simnell, the beautiful and dignified impostor, who played so well the part of a youthful prince, in a manner that is hardly surpassed in interest by the narrative of Hume; and he

describes the meeting of the king, the nobles, and the multitude at St. Paul's, on receiving the news of the fall of Grenada, and the victory of Ferdinand and Isabella, with something of the pictorial power of Robertson. Bacon, although now sixty years of age, and overwhelmed with his disgrace and his debts, still possessed much imagination, and wrote with constant animation. Some later writers have pronounced his History tedious, but this feeling arises rather from the faults of his style than from those of his narrative.

Since Bacon's time, the language has passed through a great purification, and many of his phrases seem now coarse and even ludicrous. He is sometimes obscure, often confused, and wants always taste in the choice of his expressions. Perkin Warbeck, begins "to *squint one eye* upon the crown, and the other upon the sanctuary." Bacon speaks of a "*touch of a speech*," "secret spials," "privy-stitches about his heart," "rake-hells," and various other phrases, which probably even in his own age seemed low and coarse. But in order to give the reader some example of his manner of writing, I extract a brief passage. It is full of his peculiar merits and defects. He is writing of Perkin Warbeck, the pretended Duke of York, who had now just made his appearance in Flanders.

"The news hereof came blazing and thundering over into England, that the Duke of York was sure alive. As for the name of Perkin Warbeck, it was not at that time come to light, but all the news ran after the Duke

of York, that he had been entertained in Ireland, bought and sold in France, and was now plainly avowed, and in great honor in Flanders. These fumes took hold of divers; in some upon discontent, in some upon ambition, in some upon levity and desire to change, and in some few upon conscience and belief, but in most upon simplicity, and in divers out of dependence upon some of the better sort, who did in secret favour, and nourish these bruits." And again: "Perkin, hearing already the thunders of arms and preparations against him from many parts, raised his siege, and marched to Taunton, beginning already to squint one eye upon the crown, and another upon the sanctuary."

Bacon labored upon his History with great zeal and patience, and when it was finished, submitted his manuscript to all classes of people, the plain country gentleman as well as the scholar, and the statesman. He was good natured under criticism, and readily adopted every alteration that was proposed. Once he asked Sir John Danvers, an unlearned person, to give him his opinion of the work. "Your lordship knows," said Sir John, "I am no scholar." Bacon: "'Tis no matter, I know what a scholar can say, I would know what you can say." Sir John examined the History and made various criticisms, all of which Bacon allowed to be just and at once adopted them.

Although wanting in delicate taste or any ear for harmony, Bacon's style has a rude strength that carries away the sympathies of the reader. His History is full

of fine reflections, of deep penetration into character, and shows a happy power of delineating the minds and dispositions of men. He is fond of condensing in a few strong words as much meaning as possible, and he never moderates the strength of his expressions from any regard to melody. In the History, however, he avoids those conceits and double meanings which disfigure his essays, and endeavors to speak simply and plainly in a clear, narrative style; but in this he is not always successful; and that want of simplicity and naturalness, which showed so plainly in his life, is also perceptible in his writings. His style is a happy reflection of his mind and character—artificial, affected, full of great defects, and yet abounding in excellences that must always preserve it from neglect.

History evidently was not his proper field: he wanted that independence and fearlessness which should be the first quality of the historian. His disposition was timid, servile and complying; and while writing his History, he thought more of courting the favor of James and Buckingham, than of meriting the applause of posterity. His work, therefore, is little more than a panegyric of Henry VII., full of the praises of royalty and nobility, and countenancing all the arbitrary measures and tyrannical policy of that king; and however fearless he might be in philosophy, in politics he moulded his opinions servilely by those of the haughty Elizabeth and the despotic James.

It is hardly to be regretted, therefore, that Bacon has

produced no extended work upon English history, since it would only have reflected the faults of his Henry VII.; its manner would have been bad, and its lessons in morals or politics could hardly have been valuable. It must have possessed, however, many admirable passages, much fine painting of men and minds, and many strong and thoughtful disquisitions, which would have kept it from oblivion. Bacon was evidently anxious to earn the fame of an historian; but age, shame, and disease closed his life not long after the publication of his first work. He never lived to complete his proposed history of the reign of Henry VIII., or the nobler design of a History of England.

Greater even than that of Bacon, another name follows in the list of imperfect historians: JOHN MILTON—in all respects the opposite of Bacon—bold, fearless, a republican by nature, delighting in new political speculations, and casting aside with contempt the theories of the past—conceived the design of writing a History of England, which should serve to unfold his peculiar views, and give to his countrymen a trustworthy narrative of the wrongs and injustice they had met with under their royal system of politics.

It is easy to conceive what such a work would have been, when composed by the author of the "Defence of the People of England." It would have abounded in strong writing, such as no other history in the language exhibits. It would have been written in a fearless and

self-confident spirit, which would have delighted every free and manly nature; and it would have painted the Tudors and Plantagenets, the bold Elizabeth and the timid James, with a severity such as none but Milton would have ventured to assume. Its narratives of the Romish supremacy in England, too, must have been singularly new and striking; nor would the author have spared the reformers of the time of Henry VIII., or have handled delicately those priests and bishops who had formed the ritual of the English church. In every particular, a History of England by Milton would have been a work of undying interest, and must have filled the minds of the thoughtful of every generation with novel speculation and bold, inspiring thoughts.

But it could never have become popular. Milton's style was harsh, and his language rude and unrefined. In poetry, when carried away by the divine impulse, his words seem to melt into his verse, and he attains at times a perfect harmony. But all his prose is dissonant and rude. He has no delicacy, grace, or ease; and had he written a history, it would have remained rather a text-book for thoughtful men, than a production that was generally read.

His fragmentary history commences with the early legends of Brutus, and the fables of Jeffrey of Monmouth, which he notices with contempt, and closes with the death of Harold. This period gives no scope for the display of his peculiar excellence. He was evidently, however, a diligent inquirer, and labored

among the monkish chroniclers to discover something that might be believed. The History was published in 1670. In manner and style he professes to have imitated Sallust, of whom he had ever been an admirer; but there is little to remind one of his model, in his harsh style and imperfect manner. There are, however, some fine passages in the work, much strong writing, and a promise that all his peculiar powers would have readily unfolded themselves, had he continued and perfected his narrative.

Milton also wrote a brief history of Muscovy, embracing a description of that country as far as it was known, and an account of its various monarchs. This work was prepared with his usual care, and his facts had been collected from many authorities with labor and research. He takes great pleasure in geographical inquiries, and calls geography a "delightful" study. It is probable that although Milton never attained the rank of an historian, these historical studies amused and solaced the closing years of his life. He died in 1674, a few years after the publication of his fragment of English history.

Dean Swift, the last of these writers that I shall mention, seems to have had a natural taste for narrative, and might well aspire to become an historian. His "Conduct of the Allies," "Gulliver's Travels," and his account of the last years of Queen Anne, show no little power in narration; and had he given sufficient time and labor to his History, he must have produced a

valuable work. In his preface to the History he relates that he had been engaged upon it, or thinking of it for sixteen years. It was published in 1719, with a dedication to the Count de Gyllenberg, the ambassador of Charles XII. Swift was now in a kind of exile at Dublin, frowned upon by those in power, and believed to be secretly desirous of bringing over the Pretender. This suspicion, he certainly, in his moody misanthropy, took no pains to remove. The count, to whom he dedicated his fragment, had been instrumental in fomenting an insurrection of the Jacobites, which his master, Charles, was to aid by invading England with twelve thousand men. Three years after this project failed Swift dedicates to him this work, expressing his intention had Charles himself been alive, to have dedicated it to him. He mentions with contempt George I., then king of England; and, as if by way of contrast, professes an unbounded admiration for Charles XII. This dedication is the best portion of the work, as it gives scope for Swift's peculiar irony and happy strain of compliment; but, like the History, it breaks off abruptly with a blank.

The History, Swift had designed to make a clear narrative of English affairs, not voluminous, but short and easily read. It closes with the reign of Henry II., and with the fragment of a character of that king. Swift's mind, wholly unphilosophical, and wanting the power of reasoning closely, in this production shows all its defects. He had no imagination, little enthusiasm, was coarse, ironical, bitter, and severe. The History has

some interest, and we read easily the clear narrative, set off by no rhetorical beauties, except that of perfect plainness and ease. It is not likely, however, that Swift could ever have become a great historian, even had he produced any finished work. He was never fond of labor, and all his writings flow rather from his invention and fancy, than from his memory. He seems to have made no use of original authorities, and probably contemplated nothing more than an abridgment of Rapin, with a proper infusion of his own high-church principles and tory prejudices. But he soon grew weary of the undertaking; and, although several of the characters are finely drawn, and show the master-hand of the author; yet, on the whole, the work can add nothing to his fame. It is simply a fragment, unfinished, imperfect, and composed with no just conception of the laborious duties of the historian.

In closing this volume with the names of Bacon, Milton, and Swift, I think I have done no discredit to their fame, although they take rank only among the inferior historians. History demands from its followers a lifetime of labor rather than a temporary attention; and the failure of these eminent intellects in this department of writing shows in the clearest manner, that patient toil is the chief requisite of the great historian.

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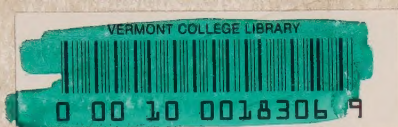
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